Commentary
September 1997

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Books in Review
James Q. Wilson • Gabriel Schoenfeld • Stephen Schwartz
Edward Alexander • Leslie Lenkowsky

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Commentary
September 1997

Letters from Readers

Military Preparedness

To the Editor:

In their article on the war-fighting readiness of U.S. military forces ["Could We Fight a War If We Had To?," May], Frederick W. Kagan and David T. Fautua list seven "crises" to which the Bush and Clinton administrations responded by sending military force. They then say that

> under these two administrations, we have dispatched troops abroad more often than we did during the previous twenty years under Presidents Reagan, Carter, Ford, and Nixon.

This is simply untrue.

According to the Congressional Research Service, a partial listing of instances where U.S. armed forces were deployed abroad includes: the evacuations from Cambodia and South Vietnam (1975); the *Mayaguez* incident (1975); the Lebanese evacuation (1976); the additional deployment of forces to South Korea in 1976 after an incident in which two U.S. military personnel were killed; the 1979-92 military-advisory effort in El Salvador; the Iranian hostage-rescue incident (1980); the shooting down of Libyan jets over the Gulf of Sidra (1981); the deployment of military personnel to participate in the multinational force in the Sinai (1981); the deployment of U.S. Marines to participate in multinational forces in Lebanon (1982-83); the series of exercises from 1983 to 1989 in Honduras; the deployment of forces to Chad (1983); the invasion of Grenada (1983); the bombing strikes in Libya (1986); the 1987-88 convoy operations to escort Kuwaiti tankers in the Persian Gulf; and the deployment of forces to Panama in 1988 during a period of instability.

The authors also state that the U.S. is now unable to field the necessary forces to meet two Major Regional Contingencies (MRC's), i.e., wars, as outlined in former Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's 1993 Bottom-Up Review (BUR). That may or may not be so, but, more importantly, prospective opponents today are not capable of fielding forces strong enough to require the force structure called for in the BUR.

Consider the 1997 *Strategic Assessments Report*, which was released earlier this year by the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies. With respect to the two regional flashpoints at the time of the Gulf war, the Korean peninsula and the Persian Gulf, the report found that "the prospect of near-simultaneous conflicts in both theaters is declining."

Iraq, according to the report,

> has not been able to replace its war-damaged and aging weaponry. It has suffered serious desertions from its armed forces, indicating poor morale. There has been unrest in the officer corps and repeated purges and executions of officers, impairing command control.

As for North Korea,

> major war would not seem to be a rational option for the North Korean leadership. Indeed, an all-out attack could be suicidal, spelling the end of the North Korean state. As the threat recedes, so will the necessity to plan for Korea as a major regional contingency.

The point is that given the increasing unlikelihood of a two-MRC scenario, there is less strain on the existing force structure. Moreover, if the authors were truly concerned about the burden on the Army, they would be calling for the executive and legislative branches to exercise greater

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selectivity about participation in peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations.

DAVID ISENBERG
Center for Defense Information
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

I do not agree with the example of the Roman military crisis of 376 C.E. given by Frederick W. Kagan and David T. Fautua to illustrate their thesis that the American military has inadequate forces to meet MRC's.

According to the authors, the Romans had forces to deal with the Germanic tribes on the Rhine and with Persia but were unable to deal with the unexpected invasion of the Goths.

But one could postulate any number of MRC's. What if the Romans had the military assets to respond to three MRC's and a fourth had developed? Or what if they had the assets to respond to four MRC's and a fifth had appeared? One cannot provide for every imaginable threat. And in fact the invasion by the Goths was not unpredictable: it was provoked by outrageous Roman mistreatment and could have been avoided.

The Goths fled their homeland under pressure from the Huns. The emperor Valens permitted them to settle south of the Danube in 374 C.E., but the Romans abused the Goths, enslaving the refugees and exploiting them in other ways. Thus, the hostility of the Goths was the fault of the Romans and could have been avoided, or at least foreseen. In other words, appropriate diplomacy and adequate intelligence can prevent or warn of an impending MRC.

JOSEPH FORBES
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

Frederick W. Kagan and David T. Fautua would probably agree with me that we have one shining advantage over the Roman empire: our "emperor," Bill Clinton, does not serve for life. We can unseat him at the next election and put someone better in his place.

I am as frightened as the authors are by the decline of American military strength in a world that is apparently descending into chaos. However, I see the parallel with the Roman empire somewhat differently from the way they do. Our decline is self-inflicted. We are making stupid decisions at the top. We are basing procurement decisions on absurd (but profoundly American) notions of mass production and cost-effectiveness when technology is changing rapidly and unpredictably. Have we forgotten the lessons of the 1930's? The British and French kept their force levels (relatively) high while the Germans created an elite force, small by comparison, with brand-new, top-flight equipment. The Allies paid the price for this in 1940. During that same period (to speak from my own area of expertise as a warship designer), the U.S. produced a new warship design almost every year, building just one or two prototypes, until by the time war broke out, we had got it just right with ships that are considered classics to this day (and were produced by the hundreds during the war).

Messrs. Kagan and Fautua see ominous parallels with the current American force structure in the Roman empire of 376 C.E., when the Romans had to pull forces from other theaters to meet a new MRC. This resulted in the weakening of the Roman posture on the other fronts, and led, ultimately, to the catastrophic battle at Adrianople. According to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, however, the Roman defeat at Adrianople was largely a result of structural weaknesses in the command system and of just plain bad decision-making in the imperial government.

I checked Gibbon's account against my Roman history textbook, admittedly published quite some time ago, and the facts are essentially the same. Unless scholarship on the Roman empire has changed radically in the last 40 years, Messrs. Kagan and Fautua seem to have rewritten Roman history to fit their thesis that the present-day U.S. Army may be inadequate even if it could fulfill its stated goal of fighting two MRC's at the same time. While their criticism of American military policy may be valid, they could have chosen better historical examples to illustrate it.

A. STEVEN TOBY
Arlington, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

I not only agree with every major point in Frederick W. Kagan's and David T. Fautua's article, but could add much more specific evidence of disarray and unreadiness in the U.S. military due to undersizing and overdeployment. Soldiers know these things, but it may be inevitable that the combat effectiveness of the U.S. Army will always be sacrificed to domestic political considerations. This is what happened between World War II and Korea and what has been happening since Vietnam.

COMMENTARY has done a great public service in publishing this article. As to whether it will affect policy, I am less sanguine. In times of peace, ignorance about war becomes invincible—the people whom we will sooner or later send to die, however, are not.

T.R. FEHRENBACH
San Antonio, Texas

FREDERICK W. KAGAN and DAVID T. FAUTUA write:

David Isenberg notes that U. S. armed forces undertook numerous missions prior to the end of the cold war, and asserts that our claim that Presidents Clinton and Bush dispatched troops abroad more often than had been done during the previous twenty years is "simply untrue," listing fifteen instances of the use of American military force in the period between 1975 and 1988. But the very cases cited by Mr. Isenberg show that the end of the cold war brought a fundamental change in the way American military power is exercised.

To be specific, here is the actual number of troops involved in the deployments Mr. Isenberg lists. Fewer than 1,000 Marines were involved in the evacuation of U.S. personnel from South Vietnam; the number of American military advisers in El Salvador was capped by Congress at 55; 120 assault troops participated in the failed Iranian hostage-rescue attempt; fewer than 1,000 men (a battalion)

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served in the American component of the multinational force in the Sinai desert from 1981 to the present; fewer than 1,000 Marines were deployed to Lebanon in 1982; and fewer than 10,000 troops invaded Grenada in 1983. Operations against Libya in 1981 and 1986, the rescue of the *Mayaguez* in 1976, and tanker-escort operations in the Persian Gulf were pure Air Force-Navy actions not involving ground forces at all. In sum, during the final decade or so of the cold war, American military forces were used only for narrowly tailored purposes and, with a few exceptions, for very limited periods of time, and the deployment of ground forces was avoided to the extent possible.

In the Bush and Clinton years, on the other hand, there has been a far more liberal approach to the use of force. Twenty thousand troops invaded Haiti, 25,000 entered Bosnia, 500,000 fought Iraq, 5,000 have remained in Kuwait to deter further Iraqi aggression, and 2,500 were sent to Somalia. While Mr. Isenberg is correct that American forces have not been deployed more *often* than under Presidents Reagan, Carter, Ford, and Nixon (and we retract our claim to the contrary), the more significant fact remains that ground forces have been dispatched in larger numbers and for longer periods of time than at any point since the end of the Vietnam war.

There is no reason to imagine that the forces propelling two successive post-cold-war American Presidents to act vigorously abroad will abate any time soon. But there *is* reason to doubt that our armed forces, faced with further cuts, will be able to manage the job without undue strain and losses.

Joseph Forbes raises the problem of the *n*th MRC. How many such contingencies should the United States be prepared for: two, three, four, or even more? As he points out, we might always encounter one more conflict than we had planned for. Our view is that American military forces should be capable of fighting a major regional conflict in every *vital* area where a *serious* potential threat exists. We are not arguing that America must have an unlimited MRC capability; but if we prepare only for the most obvious dangers, we might be unable to cope with another less foreseeable but dangerous challenge.

Joseph Forbes and A. Steven Toby question the analogy we drew between America's current strategic dilemma and that of Rome in 376 C.E. Mr. Forbes blames the Roman defeat at Adrianople on bad diplomacy, Mr. Toby on bad decision-making. Scholarship has in fact changed over the last 40 years, and historians now understand that the Goths had undermined Roman military capabilities long before the battle of Adrianople. Even though they had recently fought wars along the Danube, the Romans denuded this critically important area of forces—a very bad decision indeed. When the Goths subsequently overran the region, the Romans panicked and the disorder and haste which followed cost them dearly. True, the Romans did make bad decisions and mishandled the diplomatic situation—but can we say with any assurance that American leaders would behave differently and never engage in flawed diplomacy or faulty decision-making?

It is also the case that the Romans did not have enough resources to devote to their defense even in regions vital to their security, so they allocated them as best they could. By contrast, we do have the resources to defend our interests more thoroughly than we are doing now, but are choosing not to spend them. Nor is the United States prepared to face the two contingencies outlined in our national military strategy and recently reaffirmed by the

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Quadrennial Defense Review. Our forces are overstretched and could not take on another major crisis without withdrawing from many or all of their current operations. The United States is not likely to face a debacle of the kind the Romans suffered at Adrianople, but we do not know how high the costs of our unpreparedness in lives and in dollars might prove to be. Why take the risk?

Finally, we would like to thank T.R. Fehrenbach for his generous comments.

Zionism

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin ["After Zionism: Reflections on Israel and the Diaspora," June] says that he has mellowed in the twenty years since he published *Letters to an American Jewish Friend*, and in tone perhaps he has. In substance, however, Mr. Halkin's present essay contains the same fundamental strength, and the same fundamental weakness, as his argument of twenty years ago. The strength is his accurate assessment of the dismal long-term prospects of secular Jewishness in the Diaspora. The weakness is his assumption that it is the Diaspora rather than secularism that is the primary source of those dismal prospects.

Mr. Halkin shrugs off the lack of Jewishness of secular Israelis even while conceding that Zionism, the only available secular ideology, has lost its relevance for them. "They will do," he writes, "these Hebrew-speaking *goyim*," though even he seems uncertain as to whether "simple Israeli patriotism" would be enough to sustain their commitment in a crisis.

In 1977, by contrast, when he still had hopes for the flourishing of a secular Jewish culture in Israel, he understood more clearly the risks which de-Judaization of Israeli life would entail. "I do not believe," he wrote then,

> that a polity of Israelis who are not culturally Jews, whose roots in this land go no deeper than 30 years and no wider than the boundaries of an arid nation-state, has a future in the Middle East for very long. . . . [I]t will be blown away like chaff as though it never were, leaving neither Jews nor Israelis behind it.

Mr. Halkin admits that he failed to foresee the modest revival of traditional Judaism which has taken place in the last twenty years. He demonstrates, without admitting, that he also failed to foresee the extent of cultural assimilation among secular Israelis during that period. What his present essay shows clearly, however, and what the experience of the last twenty years makes virtually indisputable, is that only renewed commitment to traditional Judaism can ensure long-term Jewish survival, whether in the Diaspora or in Israel.

DOUGLAS D. ARONIN
Forest Hills, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin correctly points out that "Orthodoxy . . . instills not merely love for a tradition, but fear and guilt at the thought of leaving it." But guilt and fear are effective only if the price is high enough. My father's oft-repeated admonition that rituals were necessary to ensure that my children and their children remained Jews was effective largely because the price of abandoning them was the inevitable disappearance of my family's lineage—Mr. Halkin's "Jewish vanishing point."

As a father of two small children who has often contemplated moving to Israel, I ask myself: how effective would they find this argument if they were living among secular Israelis who are proud of being Jews but who have discarded all tradition and ritual and for whom Jewish history begins in 1948? How long before they concluded that, to be deemed a Jew, simply living in the Jewish state is enough? But for modern, observant Diaspora Jews like me, to raise Jewish children blissfully oblivious of their legacy is not an acceptable option. Where would *we* be better off? In New York or in Tel Aviv? On this point, Mr. Halkin is not convincing.

I take much stronger issue with his indictment of Diaspora Jews who dare to offer counsel to their Israeli brethren. Israel is more than the Jewish state; it is part of the Jewish nation, and every Jew, by birthright, is a member. And no member of the Jewish nation can be deemed to have forfeited his right to be concerned for the welfare of other Jews by his decision to live in the Diaspora.

Indeed, when a Diaspora Jew believes in his heart of hearts (as I do) that the Oslo process is likely to lead to the deaths of many Jews, does he not have a moral duty to speak up, even though his own life is not on the line? Would Mr. Halkin also advise such Diaspora Jews as Norman Podhoretz, A.M. Rosenthal, and William Safire to clam up?

Finally, the last few paragraphs of Mr. Halkin's article are simply bizarre. The words "if Israel should ever go under . . . I would not want the Diaspora to continue. . . . I would not want there to be any more Jews in the world," no matter how many times I read them, seem almost surreal. Coming from Mr. Halkin, whose writings I have greatly enjoyed over the years, they cannot simply be discarded as the ravings of a lunatic. And yet I just don't get it.

OLEG RIVKIN
Paramus, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

I have always read Hillel Halkin's writings with reservations, disliking their hectoring self-righteousness even as I have admired their eloquence. And I confess to some impatience with a formerly American Israeli who abuses his erstwhile countrymen and co-religionists in American magazines, or from American podiums, in English, for honoraria and royalty checks denominated in dollars, not shekels. It is, at the very least, inconsistent—although perhaps no more puzzling than the behavior of American Jews who pay for the privilege of being sneered at.

It was, however, with some pleasure that I began reading Mr. Halkin's essay, "After Zionism," in which he acknowledges his earlier shrillness, and even expresses some regret for it. My relief dissipated, however, when I reached the

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concluding paragraphs, in which Mr. Halkin tells his readers that if Israel were to be destroyed, he would like to see all the Jews of the Diaspora "dead there, too."

That the destruction of Israel would be the most dreadful of calamities goes without saying. Who can tell if the Jewish people could survive it, and no doubt many would not wish to do so. But it is a far cry from that kind of Zionist nightmare to the extremity of Mr. Halkin's concluding remarks. As expressed in his article, at any rate, his Zionism is the same kind of self-absorbed madness that would have led Second Temple Zealots to slit the throat of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai rather than let him lay the foundations of exilic Judaism.

Perhaps Mr. Halkin does not mean what he says. Not long ago, the Jewish prime minister of the Jewish state fell to a Jewish assassin's bullets, in part because Jews had not learned to contain in speech and writing their loathing of one another. The wild and dangerous rhetoric that encouraged Yigal Amir has its echoes in the extreme and violent tone of Mr. Halkin's closing words.

Hillel Halkin may dislike the Diaspora—fine. He does not have to live with us; we do not have to read him. But the last paragraphs of his article take his antipathy for Diaspora Jews to an appalling length. We have lived in a century in which communities of innocent Jews have indeed been exterminated. For anyone, but particularly for a Jew, to say he would welcome such events again is despicable. None of Mr. Halkin's hiding behind the phrase "not literally" can efface the rightness of his wife's reported response, "That was a terrible thing to say." It is indeed a terrible thing to say, and I am surprised that the editors of COMMENTARY would publish it.

ELIOT A. COHEN
Silver Spring, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to remind Hillel Halkin that Judaism did not begin 100 years ago at the first Zionist Congress. God promised the land of Israel to the descendants of Abraham, not to the descendants of Theodor Herzl.

It is a pity that a true Zionist like Mr. Halkin, who has given his heart and soul, his life and being, to Israel, cannot envision a world beyond the immediate future if—God forbid—Israel were destroyed. Had he lived at the time of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, would he not want Jews to exist today?

For all his devotion to Israel and to Zionism, Mr. Halkin seems to lack a basic Jewish principle: *emunah*, faith in the Almighty, that we will be redeemed.

LEONARD GETZ
Zionist Organization of America
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

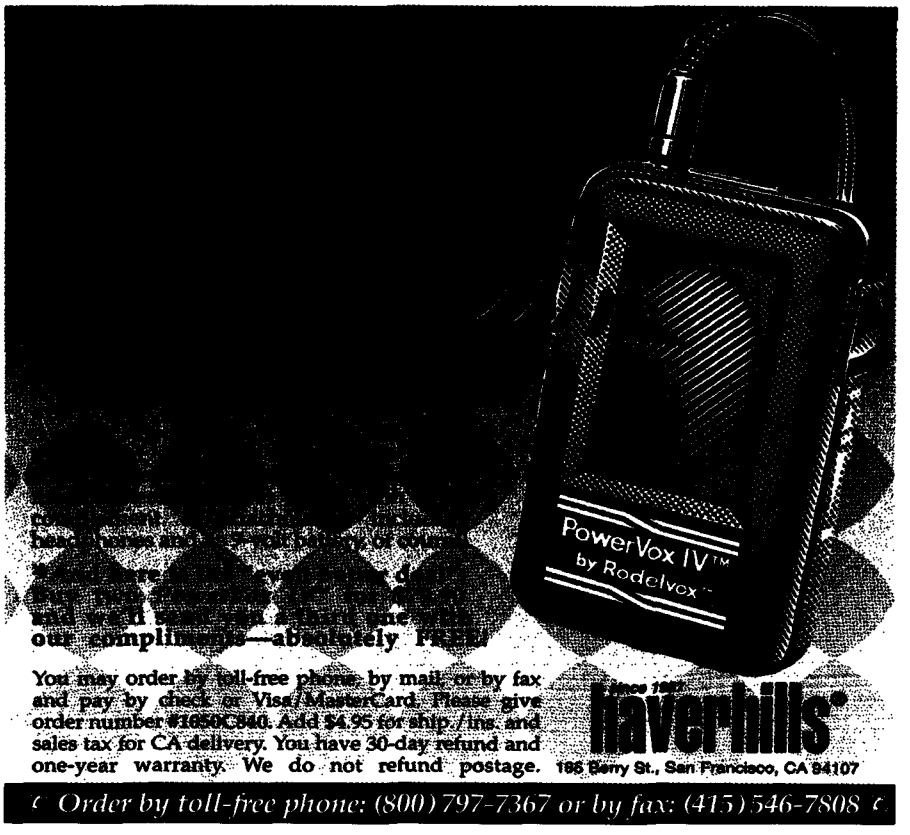
TO THE EDITOR:

Surely Hillel Halkin understands that American and other Diaspora Jews spend much of their political capital, energy, and treasure to ensure that Israel will never "go under." This alone should be sufficient justification for the Diaspora to continue. If Israel were to "go under," the Diaspora would be the only logical hope for its ever rising again.

DANIEL HIRSCH
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Like Hillel Halkin, I immigrated to Israel in the 1970's, but my experiences over thirteen years, which included fighting in Lebanon and helping establish a kibbutz, have taught me that he is dead wrong. Mr. Halkin insists that he is not alarmed by the resurgence of Israeli Orthodoxy, contending that it "will allow secular Jewish culture in Israel to develop." This is a highly problematic claim. If the Orthodox birth rate continues to soar in Israel, as it does in the U.S., then what factors will preserve the secular culture that is es-



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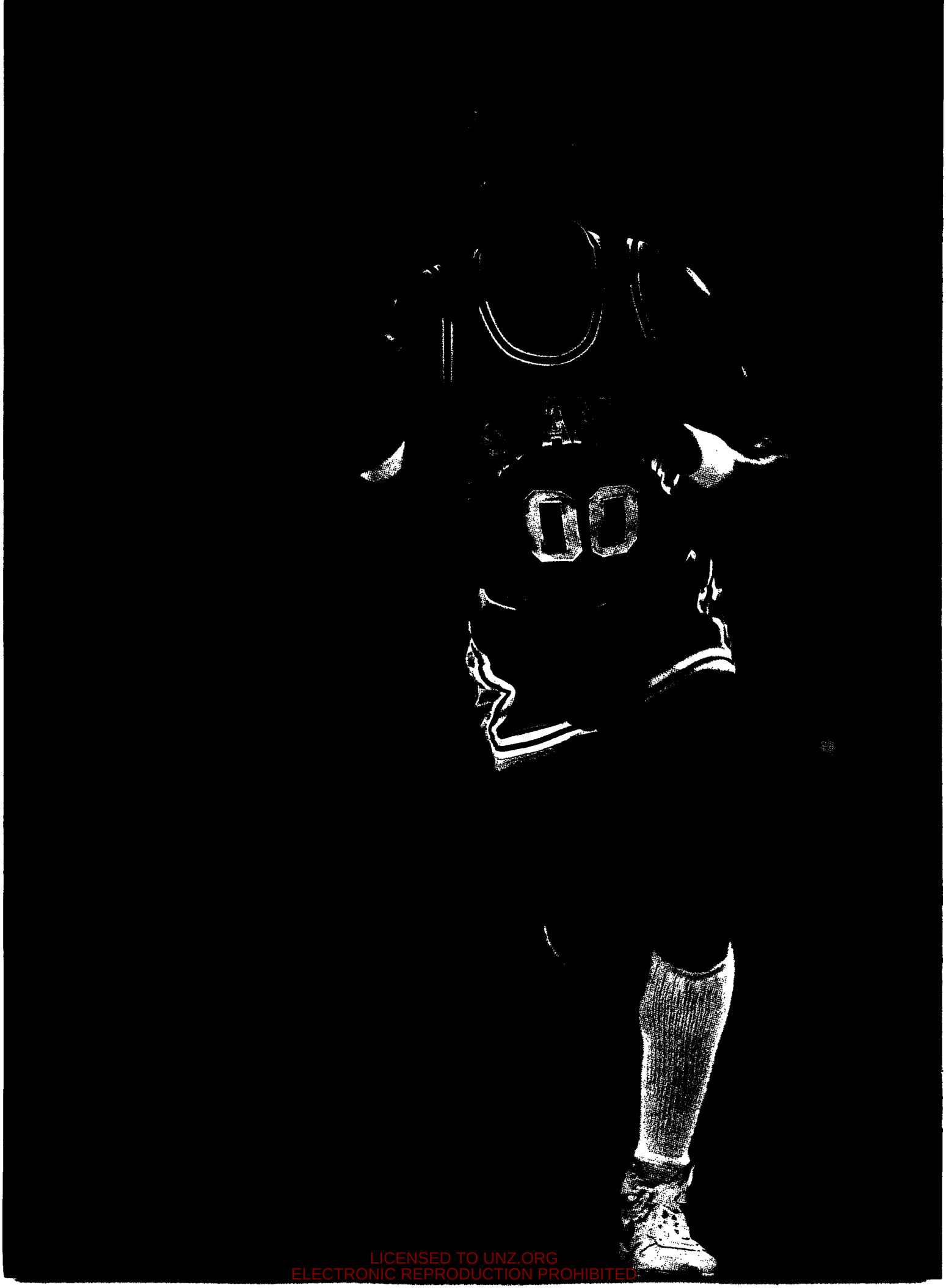

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"I was thinking, 'If I can just get to the game, I'll be all right.' "

JOHNNY MOORE

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

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sential to Israel's frail democracy? Not only does Mr. Halkin fail to take this into account, he utterly ignores the struggle of Reform and Conservative Judaism in the face of an intolerant Orthodoxy.

Mr. Halkin claims that Israeli youth secure a minimum Jewish identity simply by serving in the Israel Defense Force, risking their lives to defend their fellow Jews. But he does not dwell on the moral cost such service has imposed in recent years since the early days of the *intifada*. In my experience, as a former paratrooper and relative of currently serving Israeli soldiers, there has been a dramatic demoralization and hardening of an entire generation of young people who have been ill-served by the political excesses of the Right.

To my mind, Diaspora Judaism in its liberal forms represents an ethical alternative to an intensely particularist Israeli identity that, via state policies and social stigma, continues to value its own Jews far above all others. What many Jewish Americans have sadly come to conclude is that Jewishness and liberal values remain in irreconcilable conflict in the Jewish state.

RANEN OMER
Notre Dame, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR:

I empathize with Hillel Halkin, whose "mellowing" away from activist Zionism seems to be a function of how long he has lived in Israel. Most native Israelis (I speak only of the non-Orthodox population) seem to have given up on Zionism altogether: it hardly means anything to them, while those who have lived here for ten years or more seem gradually to lose their interest in what was once the be-all-and-end-all of idealism. I have been an Israeli for eight years now, and I have only recently come to understand the lure of a "normal" life. A normal life is what American Jews have had for a long time; Israelis want it, too. They are sick of clinging to a past of martyrdom or heroics. They just want to live.

I have to accept that idealistic Zionism is dead. So now what? If indeed what we are striving for now (and what many of the early Zionist philosophers wanted) is a "normal" country, let us admit it and get on with making this the best country it can be. We are not doing that, unfortunately. We tolerate bad government, dithering foreign policy, corruption in high and low places, a dreadful educational system, a fatal lack of road safety, a growing drug culture, religious coercion, a scandal a day, and even a complete disregard for human life (witness the horrendously built bridge that collapsed during the recent Maccabiah games, killing two Australians).

Many American Jews still feel an intense connection with Israel and are still interested in what happens here, which is why I bother to write this letter. Many of them rail against Israeli foreign policy and against the Orthodox stranglehold on religious expression. But they will never influence Israeli policy, either foreign or domestic, through their Federation missions, senior years abroad, conferences, sabbatical years, or even the Maccabiah games. They will influence us only if they immigrate, jump into the fray, vote, form movements and political parties, and help on the spot to make this country what it should be. I doubt that American Jews would tolerate the ugliness I mentioned above. They are used to something better.

MARILYN MAGEN
Tel Aviv, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

I applaud Hillel Halkin for his passionate concern over the current state of the Jewish people. However, I think it could be better directed toward trying to bring Jews closer together, not as Zionists or as post-Zionists but as members of a single faith-community.

Throughout their history, the Jewish people have held and lost the land of Israel. Nonetheless, there have continued to be Jews. Judaism has defined itself as a nation with common values, and admission into that nation has come with accepting those values (as undefined as they may currently appear). When the Jewish people have been able to live in the land of Israel, that has been the most appropriate place in which to achieve those values and fulfill those ideals. But it has not been, nor does it seem to be now, the sole, defining criterion of being a Jew. If the Jewish people have no shared ideals, no common goal toward which to strive, the land, in and of itself, is meaningless.

MARK PHILLIPS
Huntington Woods, Michigan

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

Oleg Rivkin and others "just don't get it." How can anyone but a "lunatic" (and Mr. Rivkin is kind enough to doubt that I am one) wish that the Jewish people cease to exist if Israel perish?

The answer—as I thought the last lines of my article made clear—is that I have an immaturely low shame threshold. If Israel were to be destroyed (and this can happen only if Jews let it be destroyed), less squeamish Jews than myself will spend a decent amount of time mourning and get back to the business of being Jewish. After all, as Leonard Getz points out, we've been through it before.

So we have. And if we blow it again this time, we will have proved that we have learned nothing from any of it. I can't imagine what place there could be in this world for a people so incorrigibly stupid.

Liberals & Choice

TO THE EDITOR:

Adam Wolfson ["Are We All Liberals Now?," June] should heed Macaulay: "[A] little knowledge of history is now and then very useful to a person who undertakes to speculate on politics." Mr. Wolfson's "19th-century America . . . [where] . . . the basic rights to life, liberty, and property, were protected by law" never existed. In the last century, the law denied the basic rights—citizenship, contract, education, franchise, jury service, marriage, professions, property, and public office—to a majority of the population: blacks, Catholics, Chinese, Indians, Jews, and women.

Mr. Wolfson laments that "the state can no longer say that pornography and

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gambling are bad for the soul and detrimental to civil order." Short of repealing the First Amendment, the state of souls is none of the state's business. In any event, Denmark and Japan are equally permissive in regard to pornography yet have a far lower incidence of rape than the U.S. Lotteries helped to finance Jamestown, the Continental Army, and the founding of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Today, almost every state sponsors and realizes revenue from some form (casinos, lotteries) of gambling.

Mr. Wolfson claims that "the 'right to choose' has never had the explicit support of democratic majorities." Yet state legislatures or referenda have sanctioned such things as charter schools, educational vouchers, ending racial quotas, gambling, the death penalty, the medical use of marijuana, no-fault divorce, tax limitations, and a host of other "choices."

If "liberals" are joining the movement for human freedom, libertarians extend them a hearty welcome. Sorry, Mr. Wolfson, we need more choice, not less.

STUART G. BARR
Denver, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR:

Adam Wolfson asks how conservative thinkers who believe in "freedom of choice" differ from those on the Left who demand the "right to choose." The point is interesting because the answer is that the two groups use the word "choice" to express very different things.

What the Left (one wishes people would stop calling leftists "liberals"—political correctness is the opposite of liberalism) means by choice is very different from what the rest of us mean. The Left's idea of choice is that the views of small minorities must not only be accepted as respectable but must also be subsidized by the government.

There is nothing wrong with the proposition that the government should be neutral toward the moral and religious views of its citizens. Indeed, this has been a central tenet of conservative thought for many years. The problem is that our government is not neutral. For example, when it bans prayer in schools it is not being neutral; it is imposing the views of atheists on the religious majority. Similarly, when it subsidizes abortions it is not being neutral; it is forcing many people to pay for something they do not believe in.

None of this, of course, has any connection with the real meaning of the word "choice."

D.P. MARCHESSINI
London, England

ADAM WOLFSON writes:

Stuart G. Barr says "we need more choice, not less." For my part, I cannot imagine what personal choices he needs that he does not already have. Perhaps the ready availability of pornography on Saturday-morning TV? The legalization of crack cocaine, or of infanticide? Maybe he hankers after the choice of doctor-assisted suicide—the next big item on the Left's agenda.

Mr. Barr's readiness to invoke the Constitution confirms a key point in my article: that the modern "right to choose" was forced on the American people by way of tortured interpretations of the Constitution. Yes, up to a point they now embrace that "right," but few would follow Mr. Barr in his demand for a still more expansive interpretation—which is why those pushing for it continue to rely on the courts.

As I argued in my article, there is a better, older understanding that once had the support of the majority of Americans. Such an understanding—it went by the now quaint-sounding name of "ordered liberty"—placed numerous limits on choice, rightly holding that it is possible to restrict such things as abortion, pornography, and drugs while at the same time protecting our basic freedoms and the rights of minorities.

I would like to thank D.P. Marchessini for his instructive comments on the meaning of "choice" and "neutrality."

David Helfgott

TO THE EDITOR:

Terry Teachout ["The David Helfgott Show," June] says that billing David Helfgott's series of piano recitals as "The Celebration of Life" represented an attempt to neutralize adverse criticism by "wrapping the pianist in greeting-card sanctimony." In this, Mr. Teachout reveals that he has failed to understand the underlying agenda of the tour, which was exactly as advertised.

Mr. Teachout also underrates the intelligence of those who paid to attend the New York concert. The great majority must have read the news stories about Helfgott's Boston concert, and knew in advance that they were not going to hear a great performer. Then why did they go, and why did they give his performance thunderous applause?

As emeritus professor at Boston University School of Medicine and vice-president of Trustees at Westborough State Hospital, let me say that to understand the audience reaction one must belong to the one in five families who have a family member who is mentally ill. The most common type of longstanding mental illness is schizophrenia, which most frequently strikes between the ages of seventeen and twenty five and affects people with widely varying degrees of severity; David Helfgott apparently suffers from a severe case. Most of those gravely afflicted are helped but not cured by the latest therapies, and may retain many symptoms. For someone who has spent several years in a mental hospital, to recover sufficiently to be able to perform Rachmaninoff—whatever the musical merits of the playing—is a miracle that the families of people who are mentally ill are delighted to applaud. In David Helfgott's success, they see the possibility that their own relatives may one day also reenter mainstream life.

ARNOLD E. REIF
Wellesley, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

There is something missing in Terry Teachout's "The David Helfgott Show." He says that Helfgott was "mentally ill" and that after the film *Shine*, he "suddenly became one of the hottest tickets in classical music." He mentions

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Helfgott's "breakdown," and the fact that he was institutionalized for many years and prevented from playing the piano. Yet Helfgott met a woman who fell in love with him and whom he married. He was finally able to give a formal concert in his native Australia, which led to a sold-out concert tour throughout the U.S.

One would think that this quite remarkable achievement would make Mr. Teachout sympathetic. But he is, after all, a music reviewer whom one would not expect to react the way the audiences for Helfgott's concert tour did.

While his reaction may be understandable, a bit of recognition, sympathy, and perhaps even admiration would not have been amiss. But Mr. Teachout does not find a single good word to say about the incredible achievement of this severely handicapped musician.

BENNO WEISER VARON
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

There is so much that is right and yet so much that is wrong with Terry Teachout's article that as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who for many years has studied and treated people with schizophrenia, I feel I must respond. After seeing the movie *Shine*, which I enjoyed, I told friends that it was the best portrayal of schizophrenia I had ever seen, noting many of the same symptoms pointed out by Mr. Teachout. But, also like Mr. Teachout, I felt that Helfgott's peculiarities were being exploited. I was reminded of the terrible days when the gentry of London visited Bedlam for the amusement of watching the

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poor, tormented inmates of the asylum.

I am afraid, however, that Mr. Teachout agrees completely with the "re-medicalizing" of schizophrenia. Such a position is anti-dynamic psychiatry. I fear he has not seen the pernicious effects of an overly medical approach to schizophrenia. Or the walking and sometimes working zombies produced when the main emphasis is on medication, rather than when medication is seen as a helpful ally in controlling existential anxiety *while* we attempt to help the person understand what is being experienced and how it came to be experienced in the characteristically fragmented way that is a core feature of schizophrenia.

JEROME D. OREMLAND, M.D.
San Francisco Institute for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Neither the movie *Shine* nor Gillian Helfgott's biography of her husband depicts psychiatry and its treatments in a positive light. Helfgott's saviors are not sensitive psychotherapists, wonder drugs, or shock therapy; indeed, the mental-health professionals are seen as simply warehousing him and forbidding him to do the one thing that will ultimately save him: play the piano.

First of all, there is no medical evidence there was ever anything at all wrong with David Helfgott's brain. Indeed, although it is commonly assumed that he is a "schizophrenic," no professional has been able to come up with a definite diagnosis. Helfgott himself remembers little of his hospitalizations and his wife has been told that all his hospital records have been lost, mislaid, or misfiled.

We do not know why Helfgott entered mental hospitals, what treatments he received, whether he voluntarily submitted to hospitalization and treatment, or if all this was done against his will or with his consent. Nor do we know how much of a role shock therapy and the psychiatric drugs themselves may play in his current behavior. Writing in the *New York Times*, the musician and psychiatrist Kyle Pruett comments:

> I wonder about too much electroconvulsive therapy, or too many tranquilizers for too many years, leaving [Helfgott] with pressured speech patterns and agitated, jumping gait and posture.

Until we know the truth about David Helfgott, his life is destined to remain a Rorschach ink-blot test of our views of mental illness. Those who believe that the mentally ill suffer from a brain disease will be able to claim that psychiatry's miracle drugs enabled him to survive outside a mental institution and to live a happy, productive life, enduring only a few side effects of the drugs necessary to save his life. Those who believe, as I do, that Helfgott's life represents the existential problems in living that all of us have to face, can point to the fact that his life is not an advertisement for the wonders of electroshock and drugs, but a caution against them.

KEITH HOELLER
Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR:

I know nothing about classical music and perhaps only a trifle more about the course of schizophrenia. But I do know quite a bit about the culture of Polish-Jewish refugees, in which I grew up. I left the movie *Shine* greatly troubled without being able to pinpoint everything that I found wrong with it. I am grateful, therefore, to Terry Teachout for his brilliant analysis, since it helped to clear up some of my puzzlement. Still, I wish Mr. Teachout had focused a bit more on the anti-Jewish agenda that I feel the filmmakers brought to their work. The cruel caricature of David Helfgott's father as a closet Nazi, the demeaning of the bar-mitzvah experience, the contrast between the frigid and rather empty synagogue atmosphere and that of the church, suffused with love and caring—all these things depicted in the movie do not seem to me to be a result of simple happenstance.

It also seems to me that the medical establishment came in for a drubbing. The scenes in the movie showing the uncaring atmosphere of the psychiatric hospital, the failure of its authorities to recognize the prize material they were dealing with, and the contemptuous attitude of the "keeper" they obtained to help their patient rejoin the community were in sharp contrast with the scenes showing the warmth and love provided in abundance by the simple folk.

But perhaps I have failed to digest the obvious truth that moviemakers today feel compelled to take any opportunity to attack the bourgeois establishment and anything that could be perceived as being allied with it.

JONAS BRACHFELD, M.D.
Moorestown, New Jersey

TERRY TEACHOUT writes:

Arnold E. Reif and Benno Weiser Varon accuse me of lacking "empathy" and "sympathy," and they are half-right: I have no sympathy with those who exploit the mentally ill for profit. Similarly, I have no quarrel with Jerome D. Oremland's summary of my position, for I am indeed "anti-dynamic psychiatry," at least with regard to the treatment of schizophrenia. Indeed, I think psychoanalytic "explanations" of schizophrenia—and of most major mental illnesses—have added greatly to the sum total of human unhappiness in the 20th century. But that is another essay.

Nor am I even remotely sympathetic toward the anti-medical point of view expressed by Keith Hoeller. Of course, much of what we casually describe as "mental illness" consists merely of an inability to cope with "the existential problems in living that all of us have to face." But I find myself wondering whether Mr. Hoeller has ever seen schizophrenia up close: the kind of mental illness to which he refers is the kind one finds in the films of Woody Allen, not the kind that afflicts such unfortunate folk as David Helfgott.

Finally, I regret not having written more explicitly about the anti-Jewish aspect of *Shine*: my only excuse is that I was writing about something else, and one can only pack so much into a single piece. Jonas Brachfeld has now taken care of that for me, and I need only add that I am in complete

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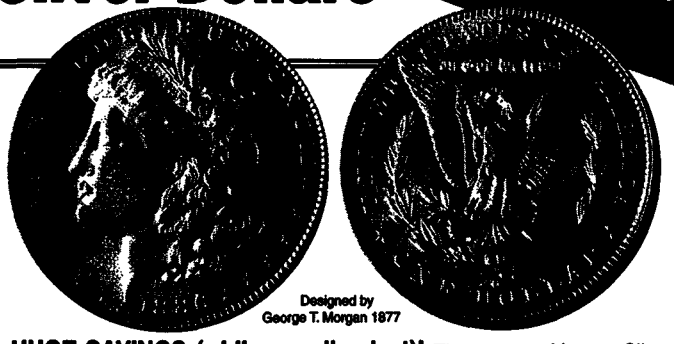

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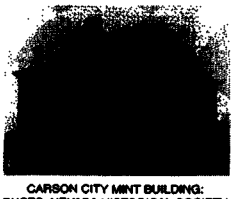

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agreement with his letter, and thank him for his kind words.

Interpreting the Constitution

TO THE EDITOR:

In his review of Antonin Scalia's *A Matter of Interpretation: Federal Courts and the Law* [June], Franklin Hunt's disagreement with well-accepted principles of constitutional interpretation begins with a distortion of Justice William O. Douglas's much-quoted hyperbolic description of the meanings to be drawn from several articles of the Bill of Rights as a whole. This distortion is in keeping with the conservative tradition of disguising disagreement with results by disingenuously claiming to follow principles.

Justice Douglas did not simply say "penumbras, formed by emanations" in finding a right of privacy in the Bill of Rights sufficiently broad to hold unconstitutional Connecticut's law forbidding the use of contraceptives in *Griswold* v. *Connecticut*. What the Justice said was that "specific guarantees in the Bill of Rights have penumbras, formed by emanations from those guarantees that give them life and substance," meaning that conclusions can be drawn from the several articles as a whole and that one of these conclusions is that each of us has a right of privacy that government cannot invade.

Apparently, because the founding fathers had little knowledge of birth-control practices, or perhaps of evolving life-styles, *circa* 1966, Mr. Hunt believes *Griswold* was wrongly decided and that, therefore, government can prohibit the use of contraceptive devices—a conclusion most thinking people today would find appalling.

The lesson to be learned from Mr. Hunt's review is that judges should eschew rhetorical flourishes in decision-writing.

AVERN COHN
United States District Court Judge
Detroit, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR:

In his review, Franklin Hunt asserts that "liberal reviewers" have largely ignored Justice Scalia's "crucial" thesis. As Mr. Hunt explains, Justice Scalia believes that the real threat to the Constitution was once posed by judges who created constitutional rights out of the vague and open-ended provisions of the Constitution that were not supported by a majority of the public. Now, his view is that the greater threat to the Constitution comes from judges who, in deference to current majoritarian preferences, disregard specific protections contained in the Constitution.

This is a strange argument for Justice Scalia to make, since the defining characteristic of his judicial philosophy in his ten years on the Court has been an almost total deference to legislative and judicial action at the federal and state level. Only rarely has he voted to strike down laws or their applications, and those votes have become especially rare in recent years. In exercising that judicial deference, Justice Scalia has, of necessity, either adopted or endorsed exceedingly narrow constructions of most of the provisions of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment, including the procedural protections for criminal cases.

Justice Scalia plainly believes that the actions of governmental institutions in our country reflect the will of the majority of the public, which a judge has a responsibility to respect except in the most extraordinary cases. Since his interpretations of specific constitutional provisions are strongly influenced by this fundamental attitude, it is difficult to sympathize with his complaint that judges are now failing to enforce the specific protections of the Bill of Rights because of an undue deference to the will of the majority.

NOAH ELIEZER YANICH
Rochester Hills, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR:

Whatever other advantages the traditional casebook and Socratic methods of teaching in law school may have, they are woefully deficient in imparting legal and moral theory. One is forced to study the law in isolation, learning the intricacies of what the law is and how to apply it but never understanding why it is thus. Amazingly enough, most students graduate from law school without having read the Magna Carta, John Locke, Montesquieu, Edmund Burke, *The Federalist Papers*, and other seminal works that provide the conceptual and philosophical framework of our legal system. As far as most law-students know, every judicial opinion they read is the intellectual brainchild of the judge who wrote it. Thus, most students leave law school with the notion that all law is politics.

Justice Scalia's textualism is dependent upon a baseline foundation of legal history and theoretical knowledge that is entirely unknown to the overwhelming majority of legal practitioners. If he and other conservatives were truly serious about stamping out rampant judicial activism and spurious legal theories, revamping the traditional law-school curriculum to include mandatory legal history and philosophy courses would be a good place to start.

DAVID MARHOFFER
Scottsdale, Arizona

FRANKLIN HUNT writes:

Avern Cohn says that Justice William O. Douglas's metaphors of "emanations" and "penumbras" in his opinion in *Griswold* v. *Connecticut* were only rhetorical excess, and what he was really doing was reading the Bill of Rights as a whole. Well, stripped of "emanations" and "penumbras," this is what Douglas actually said: the guarantees in the Bill of Rights against quartering troops in private homes in peacetime, unreasonable searches, coerced self-incrimination, and abridgement of free speech and press mean that the Constitution protects sexual privacy. End of story. Judge Richard Posner has called Douglas's opinion a "slipshod" effort.

Judge Cohn does not claim that the framers of the Constitution wrote a guarantee of sexual privacy into the Bill of Rights (being, as they were, ignorant of 20th-century birth-control practices and evolving life-styles), but he nevertheless justifies *Griswold* on the ground that

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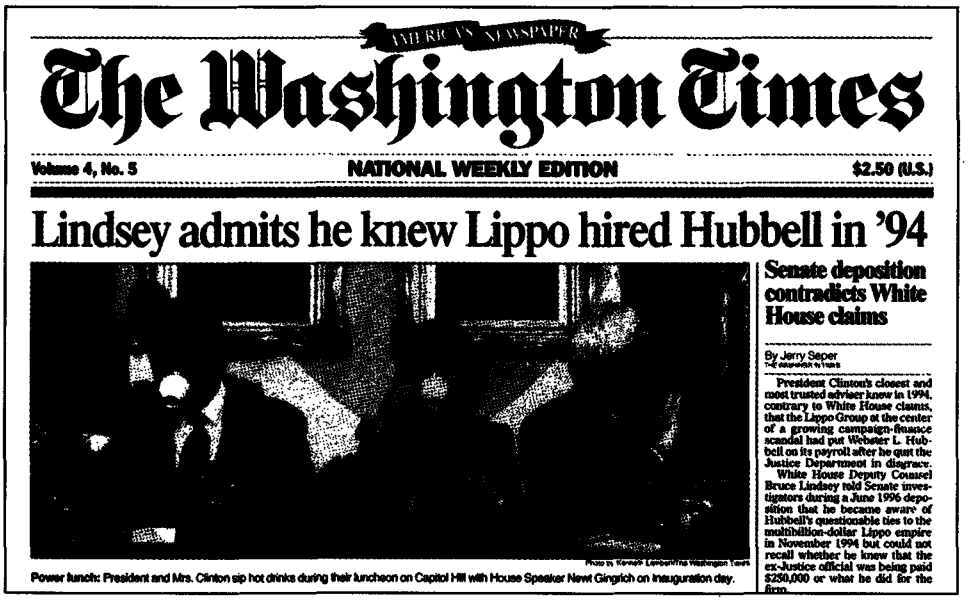

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Lindsey admits he knew Lippo hired Hubbell in '94

Senate deposition contradicts White House claims

By Jerry Seper
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Clinton's closest and most trusted adviser knew in 1994, contrary to White House claims, that the Lippo Group at the center of a growing campaign-finance scandal had put Webster L. Hubbell on its payroll after he quit the Justice Department in disgrace.

White House Deputy Counsel Bruce Lindsey told Senate investigators during a June 1996 deposition that he became aware of Hubbell's questionable ties to the multibillion-dollar Lippo empire in November 1994 but could not recall whether he knew that the ex-Justice official was being paid $250,000 or what he did for the firm.

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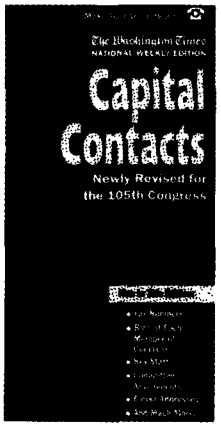

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"most thinking people today" would be appalled if there were no such guarantee. This is the "morphing" Constitution at work.

Though the Constitution does not guarantee every liberty, this hardly means that we are at the mercy of government, since people can get what they want through democratic politics. In fact, by the time of *Griswold*, anti-contraception laws had been repealed in every state but two. If Justice Douglas had invalidated the law, because, as the birth-control clinics argued, the political system in Connecticut had broken down and offered no democratic recourse or because the law was selectively enforced to the detriment of the poor, we would have had a far different and more satisfactory case, one that would have spared us the free-floating right of sexual privacy that has led to so much bitterness and anguish, notably over abortion.

It is easy to see that Noah Eliezer Yanich does not like the way Justice Scalia decides cases, but he either misunderstands Scalia or, like many liberal critics, thinks he is disingenuous. For Mr. Yanich it is Scalia's "almost total deference" to the will of the majority which has led to his "exceedingly narrow constructions" of the Bill of Rights. But Scalia believes that other than the constraints imposed by construing the Bill of Rights as it was originally understood, the majority should be free to do whatever it wishes, be it wise or foolish.

More importantly, Mr. Yanich thoroughly misunderstands Scalia's warning of a new danger of judges overriding clear and specific constitutional protections which the majority no longer cares about. Scalia is not saying that judges have become restrained and deferential toward the majority, but that the majority, having learned to mistrust judicial activists, is capturing the courts through the heavily political selection process. Consequently, the courts have begun to adopt the majority's views, disregarding plain but unpopular constitutional guarantees, not out of deference to the majority but because they now reflect its values.

I agree with David Marhoffer that it is remarkable what is not taught in law schools. To the amazement of foreign students, constitutional law courses do not even teach the text of the Constitution itself. All instruction is based on cases. But I do not think Mr. Marhoffer should count on philosophy to save us from rampant judicial activism or spurious legal theories; legal philosophies exist to support *any* preferred result. On the other hand, a serious course for lawyers in economic analysis would be of universal benefit. Lawyers and judges might then have some idea of the consequences of what they do.

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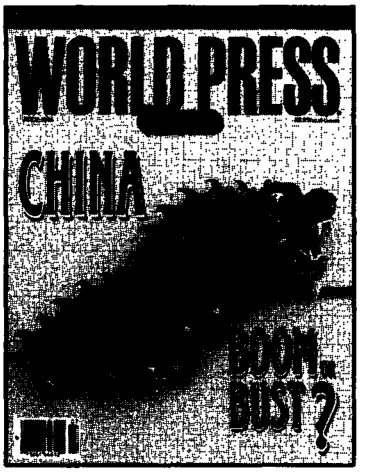

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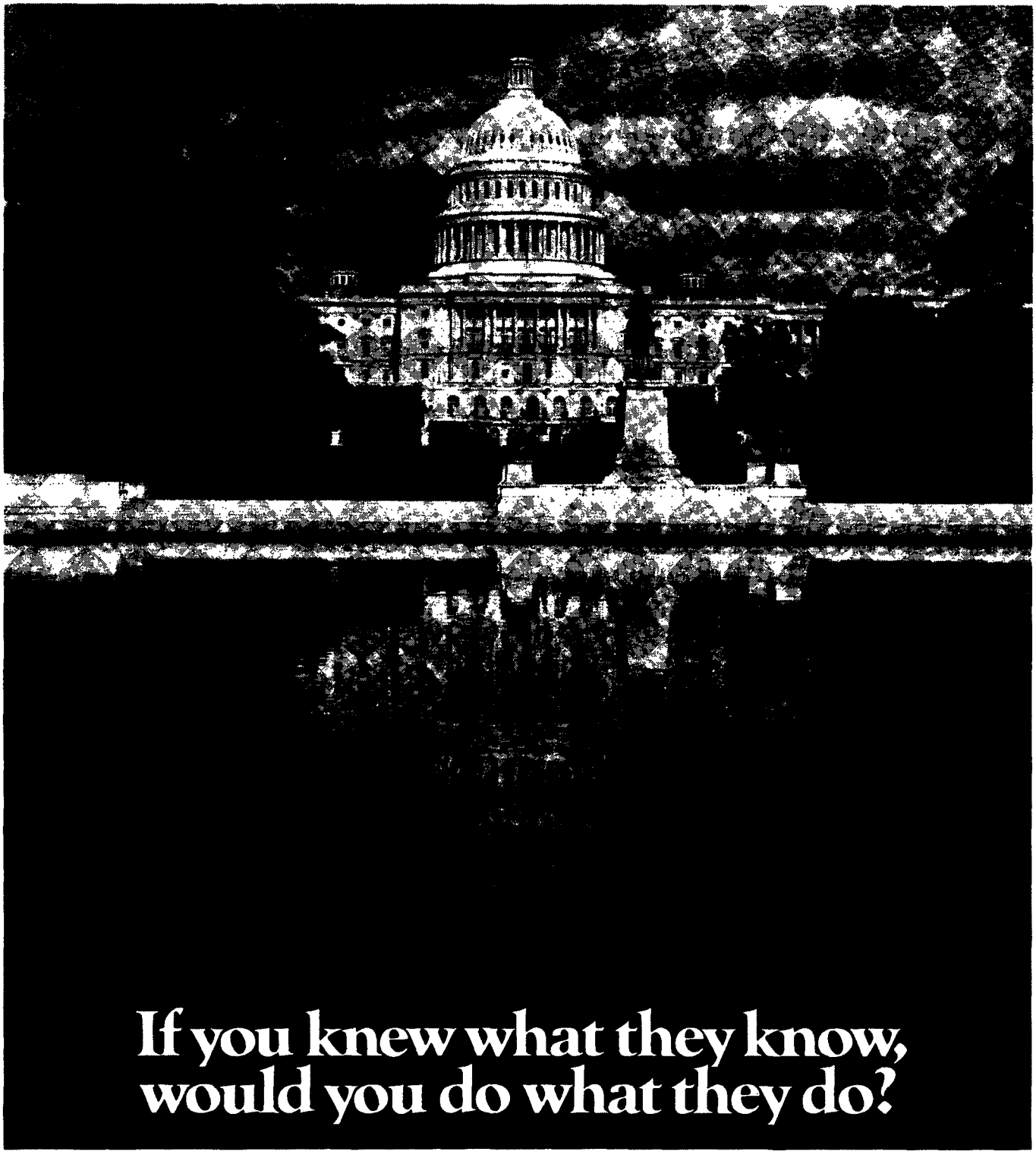

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Commentary
September 1997

A Strategy for Israel

Douglas J. Feith

YOSSI BEILIN, Israel's impresario of the 1993 Oslo accords with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), appreciates the political power of an accomplished fact. While serving in the Labor-led governments of Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, Beilin strove to ensure that the Oslo process would establish many such facts: new agreements with PLO leaders, new Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and high public expectations of "peace now." These, he explained in articles and speeches, would constrain future Israeli leaders, even (or especially) those who disapproved of Labor's peace policies. And so they have.

Benjamin Netanyahu, a fierce critic of Oslo, formed Israel's current Likud-led government over a year ago. The ensuing months have seen substantial Palestinian rioting (in Hebron this past July and throughout the West Bank last September), terrorism (most notably, the suicide bombings in a Tel Aviv café and in Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda market), and the unapologetic exploitation of such violence by the Palestinian Authority (PA) for diplomatic purposes.

DOUGLAS J. FEITH, *an attorney in Washington, D.C., served during the Reagan administration as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense and as a Middle East specialist on the White House National Security staff. In 1994 he was the principal author of the Center for Security Policy's report, "U.S. Forces on the Golan Heights?," which was published in* COMMENTARY *in December of that year.*

Yet Netanyahu has not dismantled the Oslo process. Nor has he succeeded in remedying what he had earlier diagnosed as its chief flaw: the PA's systematic refusal to comply with the accords. Although he appears not to believe that the process can succeed—that is, produce a mutually satisfactory agreement—neither will he declare that it has failed. From his first day as Prime Minister, he has found himself working within a web of others' weaving.

II

CHAMPIONS OF Oslo like to say that Netanyahu sticks with the process because he must. Since Rabin's famous handshake with Yasir Arafat on the White House lawn in September 1993, they have promoted the twin notions that Oslo was inevitable and that in any case Israel has "no alternative." When Israel embraced the PLO as its "peace partner," Rabin even asserted that this was but the natural culmination of Labor's longstanding policy in favor of trading "land for peace."

But it was not. Labor's traditional land-for-peace policy arose out of an Israeli national-security consensus that opposed any new, independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and rejected Israeli recognition of the PLO. The policy's essence was that a satisfactory peace settlement should be reached with an authoritative and credible Arab interlocutor *before* Israel relinquished any territory. Labor had never suggested withdrawal

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before peace, much less withdrawal without peace. Nor had it ever proposed withdrawal as a means of fostering Palestinian (let alone PLO) moderation in order to increase the chances of peace at some future date.

Indeed, Yitzhak Rabin led Labor to victory in the June 1992 elections on a platform that emphasized no recognition of the PLO and no new Palestinian state. His affirmative promise was a genuine land-for-peace agreement with the Palestinians within six months. Once in office, the Rabin government spent over a year in fruitless negotiations on such an agreement. But then, in the summer of 1993, with the talks stuck in a humiliating deadlock, Rabin decided that his only way out was to embrace the PLO as a partner and initiate Israeli territorial withdrawals even before the conclusion of a peace agreement. Hence Oslo.

To be more precise, Oslo represented the confluence of two streams of thought. The first, that of Rabin, concentrated on the practical benefit of quitting the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Rabin considered Israeli rule over the Arabs in these territories a burden that Israel could not carry indefinitely. As he later told the Knesset, the choice was between, on the one hand, retaining the territories and thus transforming Israel into "a binational state," and, on the other, maintaining an Israel "with less territory, but which would be a Jewish state." By means of Oslo, he declared, "We chose to be a Jewish state."

The fountainhead of the other stream of thought was Shimon Peres, Rabin's Foreign Minister. Peres believed that the end of the cold war, the information-technology revolution, and other happy circumstances had produced a "New Middle East" in which ambitions for material prosperity had taken precedence in Arab minds over the venerable aspiration to destroy Israel. He posited that the Palestinian community in general no longer burned with a high degree of religious or nationalistic fervor. What it desired was just a slice of Palestine to call its own and, with international aid and investment, opportunities for economic betterment.

Both analyses favored Israeli territorial withdrawal, although they diverged widely in their respective concepts of "peace." Rabin's unsentimental notion was "separation"—literally building fences and walls and, to the extent possible, keeping the Palestinians on one side and the Israelis on the other. To Peres, by contrast, peace meant tearing down walls between Arabs and Jews as old-fashioned ideas of sovereignty yielded to the free movement of people, ideas, and goods.

Events in the years following the handshake—especially numerous terrorist attacks that killed and maimed Israelis in record numbers—did not conform to Peres's vision. Even Israelis originally enamored of Oslo complained that the "peace process" had proved a political disappointment and a security nightmare. And Israeli Jews were stunned by the regular spectacle of thousands of Palestinians rejoicing in the streets over the carnage wrought by Arab suicide bombers. Advocating separation was Rabin's way of assuring the country that, even if the Oslo process failed to produce peace, it would at least succeed in "divorcing" Israel from two million Palestinians. Separation was needed not to make peace possible, but to make possible an Israeli withdrawal from the territories.

ALTHOUGH RABIN and Peres differed in their conception of peace, both knew that requiring the Palestinian Authority to fulfill its promises under Oslo could kill the accords, and both therefore resolved that Israeli withdrawals and transfers of authority should not hinge on Palestinian compliance. (Characteristically, the Peres school held out the hope that additional Israeli concessions would, over time, engender greater moderation on the Arab side, while the Rabin school was simply unwilling to postpone Israeli withdrawals until the Palestinians got properly organized, which might not happen for years, if ever.) But neither Peres nor Rabin would admit publicly to being resigned to Palestinian violations. Although the government's actual policy was to proceed, if necessary, with unilateral withdrawal, politically it was essential to depict Oslo as a two-sided peace agreement—a land-for-peace bargain which Israel was expecting the Arab side to honor.

This contradiction necessitated prodigies of double-talk. Here, for example, is Peres, in an interview with the *Jerusalem Post* (August 18, 1995, bracketed material in the original):

> *Q*: You have suggested that when [Yasir] Arafat spoke of *jihad* or holy war in a recent videotaped appearance, he was merely being rhetorical. Yet Arafat's critics charge that this reveals his true intentions. What is the basis for your viewpoint? Why are the critics wrong?
>
> *A*: Yes [it is rhetoric], partly said to justify the past. [At the same time] what counts is not the intentions of the Palestinians. What counts is the confrontation between two realities.
>
> *Q*: Are you saying that it is irrelevant if

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Arafat genuinely wants peace or just wants to obtain as much as he can?

A: Yes, I do believe it is irrelevant.

Q: This is a big statement.

A: [This is the] Israeli reality, the Israeli strength. We don't only rely upon [Arafat's] intentions. . . . They have changed already. They go for democracy. They go for dialogue. . . .

And Rabin, in an interview published a month later:

Q: Is this agreement irreversible?

A: As I see it, we have passed the point of no return. There is a limit to predicting the future. This is why we have to keep strong military forces, a strong intelligence community, and strong police.

Q: But when you refer to the point of no return, are you saying that Israel will not go back to the places from which it will be pulling out?

A: I did not say so.

Q: So what does "the point of no return" mean?

A: It means that we are on the road to peace.

Whatever effect such pronouncements had in Israel, they did not impress Arafat. He grasped early on that the Israeli government valued Palestinian promises more in the making than in the keeping. Not only could he flout his obligations with impunity, but he could sell Israel the same unfulfilled promises over and over again for new consideration. And so he did, both regarding the promise to delete from the Palestinian National Covenant those provisions calling for Israel's destruction and regarding the promise to suppress anti-Israel terrorism.

III

In the period between the signing of the first Oslo accords and Israel's 1996 elections, Likud made political hay out of the compliance issue. As Benjamin Netanyahu, then Likud's chairman, asserted: "There is no red line which this [Labor] government has not crossed. No sooner does it draw a red line than it erases it."

But Likud's case against Oslo went deeper than tactical criticism. Likud leaders had condemned the accords from the beginning, before Arafat had the chance to violate them. For them, Oslo's first major flaw was that Arafat—and the Palestinian leadership in general—lacked credibility and authority. A stable peace was possible, they maintained, only if the Palestinians first evolved responsible administrative institutions and a leadership that enjoyed legitimacy in the eyes of its own people, refrained from murdering its political opponents, operated within and not above the law, and practiced moderation and compromise at home and abroad.

Oslo's second flaw in Likud's eyes was that a PLO-led mini-state in the territories, which Oslo was designed to create, would promote terrorism and instability rather than security and conciliation. Accordingly, Likud leaders criticized the view that, even if real peace remained unattainable, Israel should end the occupation anyway. They argued that the Labor chorus of we-can't-go-on, there-is-no-alternative-to-peace reflected demoralization on the Left and damaged the morale of the whole country.

During 1995, the Israeli public grew increasingly receptive to Likud's arguments, and Rabin fell behind Netanyahu in the opinion polls. But in November Rabin was assassinated, causing a swell of sympathy and nostalgia for the murdered leader and his policies. It became a delicate matter for the opposition to criticize Oslo without outraging affectionate memories. From that point on, Netanyahu spoke less about Oslo's flawed conception and more about the Labor government's practice of making concessions without "reciprocity"—that is, without insisting on PA compliance—and its susceptibility to intimidation by the PA. "Arafat has gotten into the habit of fomenting a crisis and then summoning Peres to make demands," Netanyahu charged. In a Likud government, he promised, "This will stop."

Asked in September 1995 if he would honor Oslo if he came to power, Netanyahu said: "We will decide at that time. So far the PLO hasn't honored the agreement, so Israel is not legally bound to honor it." As the campaign for the May 1996 elections developed, Netanyahu clarified his position: he would not automatically discard Oslo if he won, but he would demand that the PA fulfill its commitments.

IV

After defeating Shimon Peres and winning the 1996 elections, Netanyahu gave short shrift to his own idea that the PA's systematic violation of the accords already entitled Israel to abrogate them. Announcing that he would proceed with peace diplomacy on the basis of Oslo, Netanyahu promised to exert himself in good faith to make the process work. Within hours after the

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election, he dispatched a representative to make personal contact with the PA.

In briefings to foreign-policy groups in the weeks following the election, Netanyahu's top advisers stressed a paradoxical line: while the Prime Minister still disapproved of Oslo, he was better positioned than Rabin or Peres to bring the process to a successful conclusion. This was so, above all, because Netanyahu could threaten credibly to stop negotiations if the PA's violations went unremedied. And he could do *that* because, unlike his predecessors, the new Prime Minister did not believe that unilateral withdrawal was better than the status quo. Finally, whereas Labor's political fortunes had been tied to Oslo, Likud was free to put Oslo to an honest test.

The key to repairing Oslo, Netanyahu's team recognized, lay in making the Arab side believe that Israel would walk away—terminate the process—if the PA did not improve its compliance record. The government's chief task, therefore, was to persuade Arabs, Israelis, and the world at large that Israel had a constructive alternative to Oslo and the will, if necessary, to choose it. This was no easy job, given the intrepidity of Oslo's supporters over the years in promoting the notion that Israel had no option but the "peace process."

From the start, the new government stressed a well-established Likud theme: that peace and democracy were linked. This theme was both positive and readily comprehensible—and it attacked Oslo at its heart. Warning that Arab history does not necessarily conform to the schedule of impatient Israeli doves, it highlighted the crucial issues of what Palestinian leaders actually think—their philosophy and intentions—and how their political institutions actually operate—whether by law or by the gun. By emphasizing these issues, the government intended to shift the focus of debate from the loaded question, "Should Israel make peace with the Palestinians?" to "Is peace with the Palestinians possible under current circumstances?"

Netanyahu gave prominence to the peace-and-democracy theme in addressing a joint session of the U.S. Congress a few weeks after his election:

> Unless we want more Saddams to rise, we must apply the standards of democracy and human rights in the Middle East. . . . I don't think we should accept the idea that the Middle East is the . . . last isolated sanctuary that will be democracy-free for all time except for the presence of Israel.
>
> I realize this is a process. It may be a long-term process. . . . [But] it is time for states of the Middle East to put the issues of human rights and democratization on their agenda. Democratization means accepting a free press and the right of a legal opposition to organize and express itself. . . . [It means being] able to disagree, to express our disagreement. . . . It means tolerance. And it means an inherent shift away from aggression. . . .

As time went on, however, and the new Israeli government came under increasing criticism for not moving quickly enough toward peace, Netanyahu began to downplay democracy. To the American Congress in July, he had identified the three pillars of peace as security, reciprocity, and democracy. To the Israeli Knesset in October, he announced: "We stand on two basic principles: security and reciprocity in respecting agreements." Today, almost a year later, the goal of cultivating Palestinian democratic institutions is neither a centerpiece of Netanyahu's political discourse nor an operative element of his policies.

V

THE STRATEGY the Netanyahu government outlined upon first assuming office has, then, been abandoned; but no other strategy has taken its place. Rather, the government appears continually to get caught up in events and diverted from whatever plan it may have. Many incidents have combined to create this impression, the cumulative effect of which has been to damage Netanyahu's reputation for resoluteness. A few examples will suffice:

• Netanyahu initially said he would "consider" meeting Arafat only if national security were at stake. In the first months after the May 1996 elections, no meeting occurred. Arafat then appealed to Israeli President Ezer Weizman, who, at the end of August, let it be known that he would organize a meeting in his own home with the PA chairman unless Netanyahu agreed to a face-to-face get-together within ten days. Netanyahu promptly acceded, and the two men met on September 4. While Likud members of the Knesset noted disapprovingly that Arafat had not fulfilled the conditions which Netanyahu had previously set for their meeting, Shimon Peres predicted on Israel Radio that if the pressure were intense enough, the new Prime Minister would agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state as he did to the meeting with Arafat.

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• Three weeks after this same meeting, Arafat seized an opportunity to publicize his displeasure with Israeli policy. The Netanyahu government had opened a new exit from a Hasmonean-era tunnel in the vicinity of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Denouncing this act as "a big crime against our religion and our holy places," Arafat set in train several days of large-scale rioting in which PA policemen used their automatic weapons to kill Israelis. In an effort to help end the crisis, President Clinton asked Netanyahu and Arafat to convene at the White House.

Before leaving for Washington, Netanyahu declared that the rioting "was no spontaneous combustion but rather a deliberate decision" by Arafat, and he specified that the PA had perpetrated the killings with guns provided by Israel itself pursuant to Oslo. En route to the meeting, he added: "[I]f the [PA] violations continue time and time again, clearly the conclusion will be that the [Oslo] process cannot continue on this basis." But he *also* said, and for the first time, that Israel was willing to "accelerate" the pace of negotiations and to hold "continuous talks" on a withdrawal of Israeli forces from Hebron and other issues until an agreement was reached.

At the White House, although he resisted pressure to make additional concessions to Arafat, Netanyahu made a show of warmly clasping the PLO leader's hand, called him "my partner and my friend," and asserted that personal meetings of this kind improved communication and "facilitate[d] trust."

• In an episode this past spring that got relatively little play in the press, the Netanyahu government withdrew its request to the United States to extradite Mousa Abu Marzook, a top Hamas official who was wanted in Israel on charges relating to bombings and other terrorist attacks that had killed 47 people and wounded 148. As the *New York Times* reported at the time, Israel's decision was based explicitly on "fears of terrorist reprisals." It was also, according to the *Times*, "something of an embarrassment," for the Palestinians were "certain to note that Netanyahu was effectively releasing a Hamas leader on the basis of political considerations while . . . hammering Yasir Arafat for releasing Palestinian militants charged in terrorist activities." Sharpening the point, the *Times* added that Netanyahu "had come to office with the reputation of a hardliner on the issue of jailed terrorists [and] had argued in books he wrote that they should not be set free."

• Among the principal PA violations of which Likud leaders complained both before and after the 1996 elections were: the PA's failure to confiscate illegal arms in the hands of terrorist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad; the recruitment of terrorists into the PA security forces; the PA's refusal to hand over terrorism suspects to Israel for prosecution; the rapid release of terrorists from PA prisons; the conduct of official PA operations in Jerusalem; the use of incendiary anti-Israel rhetoric by Arafat and other PA officials (including continual calls for *jihad* and praise of suicide bombers as "heroes and martyrs"); and the PA's failure to amend the Palestinian National Covenant.

None of these violations of Oslo had been remedied by January 1997, and yet in that month Israel concluded an agreement with the PA for a redeployment of Israeli forces from Hebron. In his statement to the Knesset, Netanyahu explained that his government had "inherited a difficult reality" and "difficult agreements" that were "full of breaches"—but that from now on it would insist on several "fundamental principles." The first of these was "reciprocity," which "[w]e established—in an official document—as a basic principle for the continuation of the process of the permanent-status negotiations." That official document was a "Note for the Record" drafted by the American diplomat Dennis Ross and listing unresolved compliance issues. It was, the Prime Minister announced, "the anchoring and formalization of the principle of reciprocity, for the first time since the Oslo agreements."

In other words, the Netanyahu government, intent on demonstrating its willingness to carry Oslo forward in good faith, had chosen not to make PA compliance with earlier Oslo accords a condition for the Hebron agreement or for the redeployment itself. But now that the Hebron deal was done, complete with a U.S.-certified pledge by both sides that the specified open compliance issues would "be dealt with immediately and in parallel," Israel would make rectification of PA violations the *sine qua non* for further movement under Oslo.

A half-year and more has passed since the Hebron agreement. The PA still has remedied none of its violations—Hamas has not been disarmed, none of the requested terror suspects has been turned over to Israel, the Palestinian National Covenant remains unamended, and so on down the list. But Israel has agreed anyway to negotiate "final status." The fact that these talks have been delayed until now is due not to Israel's having made "reciprocity" a condition for holding them but to Arafat's

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having suspended Palestinian participation as a protest against Israeli construction of apartment buildings at Har Homa in Jerusalem. (With characteristic brazenness, the PA condemned that construction as an Israeli violation of Oslo.)

VI

THE UPSHOT of all this is that the Netanyahu government has not communicated to friend or foe a clear message as to what it wants to accomplish in its negotiations with the PA, what Israel's minimum requirements are, or what would be the consequences if those requirements remained unsatisfied. The government has neither prepared the public to accept the possibility of an Israeli abrogation of Oslo nor succeeded in getting the Palestinians to take seriously its demands that they start fulfilling their commitments. Meanwhile, events of the last few months—from the murder of Palestinian land dealers by PA forces, to the PA's imprisonment of Palestinian human-rights advocates, to Arab riots in Hebron, to the July suicide bombing in Jerusalem—offer little grounds for Israelis or Arabs to be optimistic either about peace or about greater physical security.

What, then, is to be done about the Oslo accords, the negotiating process, the PA, and the territories? A number of options suggest themselves, of which the first would be to see the Oslo process through to completion.

Is that possible? Although Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres were coy about the matter, it is understood by all concerned that Oslo's destination, from the beginning, has been Palestinian statehood. Netanyahu declares often and emphatically that he will never agree to a sovereign Palestinian state, though he is amenable to a self-governing Palestinian entity subject to constraints to protect Israel's security and other interests. David Bar-Illan, a high-level adviser in the Prime Minister's office, explains:

> [Y]ou can call it anything you want. You can call it autonomy-plus or a state-minus. What Netanyahu is talking about is limited sovereignty. . . . It cannot have . . . an army of a quarter of a million people; cannot produce its own nonconventional [or] conventional weapons; cannot make alliances with radical regimes like Iraq and Iran; cannot control the airspace over Israel, etc.

Nor, Bar-Illan added on another occasion, can it be a regime "that will import millions of people who call themselves refugees and park them on our doorstep."

If the Israeli government maintains its opposition to a new, sovereign Palestinian state, either the Oslo "final-status" negotiations will deadlock beyond redemption (as they may do anyway over a number of other issues, like Jerusalem) or the PA will decide to accept, for the time being, whatever diminished form of statehood Israel is willing to offer. Many in Israel and abroad would judge the former outcome a diplomatic disaster for which the Netanyahu government should be held responsible. But from the perspective of Netanyahu and his supporters, the latter outcome could be even worse.

The reason is this: any "final-status" arrangement that provided for a new Palestinian state, even one with limited sovereignty, would inevitably lack finality. The state would cover less than the whole of the territories (which are anyway less than 25 percent of the "sacred Arab land" between the Jordan River and the sea). It would not include all of eastern Jerusalem (and might not include any of it). And its sovereignty would be severely limited in various ways. (All this would be true, it bears noting, even if Labor had done the negotiating, at least if Rabin's and Peres's frequent statements on the matter are to be credited.)

The premise of Oslo's "final-status" provisions is that Israel will offer at least minimum satisfaction of Palestinian national aspirations. Oslo can produce a stable peace, therefore, only if Palestinian nationalism turns out to be a small-beer phenomenon. If, on the other hand, that cause is as robust and ambitious as it appears to be, the Palestinians will not be assuaged by the kind of hemmed-in, hands-tied, semi-independent entity envisioned by the Labor-party architects of Oslo, much less the one envisioned by the current Likud-led government.

When PA leaders speak within their own community, they do not lecture their people, as they do the Israelis, on the virtues of trading land for peace. On the contrary, the PA makes a point of embellishing its stationery, public monuments, TV broadcasts, and schoolbooks with maps that designate Palestine as covering not only the West Bank and Gaza Strip but all of Israel. Arafat's domestic speeches reinforce the point by declaring that Oslo implements the 1974 Palestine National Council resolution which approved negotiations as a means of dismantling Israel in stages. Unless Palestinian leaders drastically change their own and their community's thinking, a mini-state can be expected to

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serve as a base from which the "final status" will be challenged at the first opportunity.

As for limitations on sovereignty—including demilitarization, restrictions on military relationships with other states, and limits on the so-called Palestinian "right of return"—the PA may promise to respect these as the price of Israeli recognition; but once a new state comes formally into being, how long before it defies them? Like arms-control treaties, peace agreements between democratic and non-democratic parties are often deemed of great significance until they are signed and ratified, whereupon demands that the undemocratic party adhere to their terms are commonly dismissed as legalistic and impractical.

The same means now used by the Palestinians to pressure Israel—terrorism, rioting, Arab economic sanctions, diplomatic condemnation—will also be available post-"final status." So will the means now used by Israel's neighboring states, including threats of renewed war. What will have changed—and it is an important change—is that Israeli forces will no longer be able to act directly against security threats originating from the territory of the new state without violating the internationally recognized sovereignty of an independent country.

To be sure, if one assumes that a mini-state of their own *will* satisfy the Palestinians' national ambitions and neutralize their anti-Zionism, then security concerns are beside the point: Israel need not defend itself against neighbors who actually are at peace with it. But so long as Palestinian politics remains dominated by a hostile, violent, and lawless leadership, Israel cannot assume that "peace" will serve as the basis for its security. Even without the machinery of a state, Oslo has enhanced the Palestinians' capability to exploit anti-Israel violence for political ends. A state would give them a much greater capacity than they now have to facilitate terrorism against Israel, conduct anti-Israel diplomacy, assist or join enemy armed forces in the event of war, and destabilize local states (such as Jordan) that cooperate with Israel.

In short, if consummated in the form of a new Palestinian state, Oslo over time is more likely to result in war than in peace.

VII

The Netanyahu government has a long and intimate acquaintance with these arguments; indeed, it based its campaign for office on them. That is why, for Netanyahu and his team, the option of completing Oslo must lack appeal. But this has not moved the government to discard Oslo. Although it frequently repeats its demands for reciprocity, those demands remain unmet, and the process lurches forward in any event. For various reasons, no doubt including a well-grounded fear of massive upheaval in the territories, and the prospect of confrontation with 50,000 or so PA policemen with automatic weapons, even this new Israeli government has declined to put Oslo to a make-or-break test.

And so we come to another option: a "final status" which would not be arrived at through the Oslo process but would, in effect, be imposed by Israel. This might be thought of as unilateral withdrawal accompanied by tough talk. The Netanyahu government floated such an option in mid-June of this year when, with the Oslo process stalemated, the Prime Minister's office undertook a new diplomatic initiative known as the "Allon-plus" plan. As presented to the cabinet and to journalists, the plan delineated a "final-status" map identifying additional land the Prime Minister was willing to transfer to PA control.

"Allon-plus" was a puzzling move. The government anticipated all along that talks would eventually resume—in August, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright announced a renewed American effort toward that end. Netanyahu may have thought that the "Allon-plus" plan, by showing a willingness to relinquish even more territory to the PA, would make Israel appear forthcoming in the Oslo process and therefore protect it from criticism if the talks should again fail. But there are no signs that "Allon-plus" could win the PA's acceptance, or even come close. Not even the original Allon peace plan of the early 1970's ever received a serious nibble from any Arab leader. As Netanyahu's plan is even less favorable to the Arab side than was the original, it cannot be expected to shield the government from blame in the event of the Oslo talks' failure.

Dore Gold, a top adviser to the Prime Minister who was recently appointed Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, has offered another reason for floating the plan: it was intended to lower unrealistic Palestinian expectations of "a Palestinian state on all of the West Bank and Gaza with East Jerusalem as its capital." According to Gold, "One of the things this plan does is to shift the psychology of expectations." But it is an open question whether publishing the Allon-plus map has tended to deflate or inflate such expectations. Identifying more land for future relinquishment is tantamount

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to having given up that land already; the other side can be expected to demand that negotiations now begin from the new baseline. And if the Netanyahu government, never having translated its Allon-plus plan into a reality on the ground, were to be succeeded in time by a Labor government, the latter's starting point for territorial concessions would inevitably be the previous government's map.

The Oslo accords were meant to give Rabin's policy at least the appearance of a bilateral peace. A unilateral withdrawal along the lines of the Allon-plus plan would preserve all the disadvantages of completing Oslo and offer none of its diplomatic rewards.

VIII

FINALLY THERE is the option of stalling, of paying lip-service to Oslo without actually moving toward a "final-status" agreement. This at times has seemed to be the Netanyahu government's real policy.

Stalling entails taking advantage of opportunities not to have to negotiate. For example, when Arafat suspends talks, as he did over the apartment construction at Har Homa, Israel waits patiently. When Arafat finally moves to restart discussions, as he did by sending his negotiators to meet with Israelis in Cairo, Netanyahu can truthfully claim to have paid nothing.

But stalling is not a winning strategy. The appearance of stalling damages the government's credibility at home and abroad. If it claims to be committed to Oslo but fails for weeks and months at a time to move the process along, Israel looks disingenuous. This makes it harder to marshal support when support is needed: in the Har Homa episode, for example, the government was accused by the Israeli Left of making its decisions not on the merits of the case but for the purpose of sabotaging Oslo.

Stalling also has the drawback of not leading anywhere. However one evaluates Yitzhak Rabin's policies, it cannot be denied that he moved Israel decisively onto a new course. There was no possibility that Rabin's successors could simply restore Israel to its position before the handshake. But if it relies on stalling, the Netanyahu government will come to an end without having moved Israel off the Oslo course. And since the appearance of indecision does not please the public, a stalling policy may bring the government to an end sooner rather than later.

Netanyahu campaigned in 1996 by promising peace with security. Stalling means he will not deliver on "peace." And Arafat can see to it at any time—including, as a reminder, just before the next Israeli elections—that Netanyahu will be unable to boast that he delivered on security, either. Stalling, in other words, preserves the possibility that Labor will one day return more or less to the diplomatic situation that existed before Netanyahu came to power. It could then close an Oslo "final-status" deal that he is now unwilling to accept. At that point, Netanyahu's government may be seen as having done nothing but delay the inevitable.

IX

THERE IS justice in Netanyahu's complaint that his predecessors dealt him a dreadful hand. The Oslo process points toward unending Palestinian demands backed by threats of violence and an enhanced ability to execute them. Defiantly and systematically, the PA continues to violate the accords and to rely on rioting and terror as the motive force of its diplomacy.

As bad as this situation was for Rabin and Peres, they could find consolation in the fact that they wanted the withdrawal process to proceed, regardless. Netanyahu, in contrast, has said for years that he opposes one-sided "peace" diplomacy. But his betwixt-and-between policy of neither completing nor discarding Oslo, while failing to stand his ground in demanding an end to PA violations, has not won diplomatic sympathy for Israel around the world, including in Washington; has not satisfied any significant segment of the Israeli political spectrum; and has not prevented anti-Israel terrorism or substantial upheaval in the territories.

It is questionable how much longer Israel can live with a "peace process" in which PA officials continually assert that, if Israel is unreasonable, violence is inevitable and in which PA violations themselves remain unremedied. Those violations are likely to grow still graver the more Israel refrains from demanding compliance, and continues to show that it can be intimidated by threats of violence. The more concessions Israel makes—especially as to the arming, training, and operations of PA security forces—the greater will be the PA's capabilities to carry out armed attacks.

Is there a way out? Only if the Israeli government were willing to declare that the PA has failed to meet the Oslo accords' make-or-break test. A year ago, Israeli officials were saying that a real peace process must be two-sided, and free of violent threats. They could do worse than remind themselves of this, and take steps accordingly to

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develop a credible strategy to repudiate Oslo in light of the PA's irredeemable malfeasance.

This is not a task to be undertaken lightly, or overnight. Repudiating Oslo would compel Israel, first and foremost, to undo the grossest of the errors inherent in the accords: the arming of scores of thousands of PA "policemen." Rabin's theory was that once Arafat had an amply equipped security force, he could be relied on to crack down on Palestinian "extremists" more brutally and effectively than Israel could do. In fact, Arafat has proved himself far more willing to violate Oslo by confronting Israel than to fulfill his Oslo obligations by confronting Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The PA's security force has succeeded primarily in aggravating Israel's terrorism problem.

Of all the accomplished facts engineered by Netanyahu's predecessors, none is more constraining than the PA's armed forces. If Israel should respond to PA violations of Oslo by abrogating the accords, it would have to disarm those forces before it could disarm the groups that recruit, indoctrinate, train, supply, and dispatch suicide bombers and other terrorists from areas that Israel has turned over to PA administration. (PA forces have themselves been directly implicated in some of the recent terrorist attacks.) Any strategy for repudiating Oslo must therefore take into account the price in blood Israel would have to pay to reestablish an effective security and intelligence policy in the areas now under PA control. That price would be high. It would not likely be so high, however, as the military and diplomatic price Israel would have to pay if it were compelled to take action against terrorists based in a new Palestinian state.

On the battlefield of ideas, repudiating Oslo would necessitate a sustained effort to refute simplistic thinking. The government would have to deflate expectations of imminent peace; preach sobriety and defense; and focus public debate both in Israel and abroad on what must happen on the Arab side before a lasting peace agreement becomes achievable.

But repudiating Oslo need not mean ending diplomacy, or abandoning efforts to bring about the conditions necessary for peace. As it went about explaining to its own citizens why they should not overvalue peace parleys with gangsterish officials of an incipient police state, the Israeli government could also encourage the beneficial evolution of Palestinian politics. To be sure, Israel's influence here is limited; if democratic practices are to take root in the Palestinian community, Palestinians themselves will have to see to it. But if Israel cannot pull democracy out of a hat for the Palestinians, it could at least maintain faith with the many moderate, decent, democratically-inclined Palestinians whose misfortune (thanks to Oslo) is to have been consigned to PLO rule. Israel could also foster economic prosperity and an appreciation of the rule of law, and promote conciliation and greater sympathy among populations. One way it could work toward this end, as Netanyahu suggested in his July 1996 speech to the U.S. Congress, would be by putting "the issues of human rights and democratization on [the] agenda."

Unrealistic expectations about peace work like a euphoria-inducing drug. What both Israel and the Palestinians could use now is the salutary, if rigorous, therapy of detoxification. The process would hardly be easy or pleasant, but it is the only way out of Oslo's web. Much rides on the ability of Israelis to revive those qualities of steadiness and determination that sustained them for decades when the Jewish state did not expect "peace now."

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Is It All in the Genes?

Francis Fukuyama

TO PICK up a newspaper these days is to be struck by the pace of developments in the biological sciences. The deliberate manipulation of genes which produced the world's first cloned animal, a sheep named Dolly, is only the most sensational case in point; every week, it seems, a new gene is discovered that controls some aspect of human personality, from depression to aggressiveness. Clearly, just as we are living through a revolutionary age in information technology, we are living through a revolutionary age in biology. Indeed, the two revolutions are mutually reinforcing: the genome could not be decoded or even recorded were it not for the advent of extremely powerful computers, while information specialists have increasingly looked to biological models for their understanding of how complex systems evolve and organize themselves.

From the point of view of society, enormously difficult questions are raised by this revolution, and already a presidential commission is studying both the legal and the ethical issues arising from human control over the genome. This makes it all the more striking that in most academic treatments of society and politics, today's biological advances are considered virtually out of bounds for discussion. But there is a history here, rich with implication.

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FOR MUCH of the 20th century, the social sciences have been premised on Emile Durkheim's "rule" that social phenomena are to be explained primarily by reference to other social facts. In this understanding, human behavior, whether in the economic and political arena or in the private realm of sex and the family, is "socially constructed": that is, the result not of underlying biological tendencies but of prior human agency. To take an example from contemporary life, if there are today relatively few female Asian-American longshoremen, this (according to the social-constructionist view) has little or nothing to do with questions of hormones or physique; rather, "society" has defined cultural stereotypes that push particular people into certain roles and away from others. In other words, it is "nurture" rather than "nature" that best explains human behavior.

As the historian Carl Degler documented at length in *In Search of Human Nature* (1991), the social-constructionist view needs to be seen against the backdrop of a still earlier development in the social sciences to which it was in many ways a reaction. By the end of the 19th century, Darwin's theory of evolution had come to be applied to social questions, most famously by the philosopher Herbert Spencer in England but also by a host of American sociologists who used it to explain differ-

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ences among human groups. Their theorizing was, to a large degree, overtly racist. The Princeton psychologist Carl C. Brigham, for example, in *A Study of American Intelligence* (1923), drew on IQ tests administered by the U.S. Army to demonstrate that immigrants from Southern Europe were intellectually inferior to those from Northern Europe, and that blacks were more dull-witted yet. The notion that the world's races could be stratified in terms of evolutionary development—an idea popularized in Madison Grant's 1916 book, *The Passing of the Great Race*—helped provide grounds for passage of the 1924 Immigration Act, which established strict quotas for new immigrants based on their density in the existing American population.

It is striking, in retrospect, how many respectable intellectuals and academics from that period, and from every political perspective, took seriously the threat posed to the American gene pool by racial intermarriage and immigration. Up until it was finally discredited by the Holocaust, the eugenics movement had powerful adherents in the United States, including such "progressive" figures as Margaret Sanger, the champion of birth control.

The debunking of this kind of crude Darwinism was largely the work of a single man, Franz Boas, a German-Jewish anthropologist who immigrated to the United States toward the end of the 19th century. From his perch at Columbia University, Boas trained an entire generation of anthropologists. One of his most important pieces of research was a study, funded by the federal government, undermining the notion that America's different "races" manifested different levels of intelligence as reflected in the shape of their heads. Patiently taking measurements over a ten-year period, Boas and his team of researchers demonstrated that the head shapes of all immigrant groups tended in time to converge—which at least in this case proved, he argued, the primacy of environment over race.

Boas is justly famous as one of the fathers of modern cultural relativism, an intellectual disposition that can trace deep roots to Nietzsche. In *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911), Boas maintained that people in so-called primitive cultures were no less mentally developed than people in contemporary Europe or America. Where ethnocentrists and the ignorant spoke freely of cultures as being "higher" or "lower," in fact they were only different.

It was left to Boas's most famous students, the anthropologists Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, to popularize these notions. Not only, they taught, were there few universal cultural truths, but human social practices were highly malleable. Thus, Ruth Benedict spent much of her career highlighting the extreme cultural variation across societies, a variation which had not, she argued, arisen from natural causes. Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) set forth the instructive ways in which sexual roles and practices on a South Sea island diverged from the moral rules prevalent in North American society. To Clifford Geertz, perhaps the best-known of a later generation of anthropologists, it was an axiom that, since no natural standard existed by which cultural practices could be judged, scholars could only catalogue the world's complex systems through a process of "thick description."

Of course, those who preached cultural relativism often adhered to their own covert form of cultural stratification, except that it reversed that of the social Darwinists: for the cultural relativists, the *less* developed a society, the more likely it was to be superior to our own. Therein lay the origins of what might be called the Samoa trump card, whereby any generalization about human behavior could be topped by saying, "Well, what about society X?"—X being any remote, exotic, and hypothetically less repressed society than America of the 1950's or early 1960's. Margaret Mead, in particular, was as ideological as the social Darwinists of the turn of the century, only hers was an agenda of feminism and sexual liberation in which facts contradicting her hypothesis were often conveniently ignored.

Social scientists today are still very much in thrall to the twin ideas that culture—that is, a given community's complex of norms, rules, values, habits, and identities—is socially constructed, and that our own culture—Western culture—has much to answer for by comparison with others. Such is the logic at the heart of contemporary multiculturalism, which can trace its intellectual parentage (if not all of its political alliances) to modern anthropology's celebration of non-Western cultures and diversity. Similarly with the conviction that the behaviors produced by culture are almost limitlessly plastic: a visitor to the annual convention of the Modern Language Association is regaled with papers and sessions whose common premise is that traditional markers like male/female or gay/straight are simply arbitrary social constructs, out of which individuals can and must struggle to achieve new (and presumably more satisfying) identities.

According to the sociologist Sherry Turkle in *Life on the Screen*, the "post-modern" environment of cyberspace offers a particularly apt vehicle for

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such activity, as individuals interacting in chat rooms or "multi-user domains" can assume multiple new identities at will. Computer-generated avatars allow pimply fourteen-year-old boys to masquerade in the anonymity of the Internet as twenty-six-year-old sex queens: social construction for the masses.

THE ONLY problem with the idea that identities are socially constructed and that human behavior can be molded at will is that it does not appear to be true. Slowly but surely, evidence has been accumulating over the past generation to the effect that human behavior is strongly influenced by genetic inheritance. Biology and culture interact in complex ways, limiting the freedom with which human identities can be manipulated either by individuals or by societies.

Two streams of biological research have contributed to the new understanding. At the "micro" level, molecular biologists, neuroanatomists, and neurophysiologists have focused on the chemistry and physical wiring of the brain. Psychological attributes—lust or fear, the ability to appreciate music, even the ability to make moral choices—have been localized in various sectors of the brain. Different types of rage, for example, are controlled by specific regions of the hypothalamus, which integrates signals from the brain's limbic system and stimulates the adrenal gland to produce the hormones of stress: adrenaline and cortisol. Huge advances have occurred in the study of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which in turn have yielded treatments for mental disorders like schizophrenia. And beyond the brain, molecular biologists are closing in on the human genome, which is being systematically mapped, classified, and analyzed.

One of the casualties of this stream of research has been Sigmund Freud. Many of the behaviors he described in terms of the psyche can be shown to result instead from chemical imbalances, and are thus readily treatable through drug therapy. To proponents of the new biology, Freud's analytical apparatus—the superego, repression, the Oedipus complex, the death wish—now seems hopelessly primitive, like describing the workings of a personal computer without knowledge of semiconductors and software.

Meanwhile, at the "macro," or behavioral, level, we have seen a major revival of Darwinian analysis in the field of ethology, the comparative study of animal behavior. Where cultural relativists posit an endless proliferation of behavioral possibilities, evolutionary biologists in the 1960's and 1970's came to be struck instead by the *consistency* of certain patterns across different species. Probably the most famous example is the greater selectivity shown by females as compared to males in the choosing of sexual partners. This tendency, it turns out, is not only universal across virtually all known human cultures, but also characterizes the vast majority of animal species, with a few known exceptions like the phalarope and the Mormon cricket.

Sociobiology, as this field first came to be known after Edward O. Wilson's famous 1975 book of that title, provides an evolutionary explanation for these consistencies. Both sexes are driven by the need to "get their genes into the next generation," but females make a relatively larger investment in their offspring. They are especially vulnerable during pregnancy and while raising their young, and much more limited than males in the sheer number of offspring they can produce. Female psychology has thus evolved differently from that of males, whose genetic interests are better served by the more indiscriminate propagation of their seed.

To be sure, critics, including some scientists, have subjected the findings of the sociobiologists to fierce attack. To some, like the paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould, sociobiologists, lacking access to the actual fossil record, are guilty of *assuming* that a particular characteristic has an adaptive significance merely by virtue of the fact that it exists. And sociobiological explanations for psychological phenomena have been derided as more ephemeral still, since even fossils could give no clue to the evolutionary lineage of a given trait.

THE MORE important problem faced by sociobiology has been ideological. In contrast to 19th-century social Darwinists, most evolutionary biologists today do not think that race is particularly important from a genetic point of view. But the same cannot be said of gender, which, they tend to believe, shapes not just physiology but psychology as well. Not only do males and females follow distinct reproductive strategies, they also respond to different sets of emotional drives. These drives, according to the sociobiologists, account for the fact that although a very large number of human societies have practiced and legitimated polygyny (men having multiple wives), very few have practiced polyandry (women having multiple husbands). The same drives explain why female jealousy tends to focus less on the actual infidelity of

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the male than on the loss of emotional support; why the enjoyment of pornography, like the hiring of prostitutes, is almost exclusively a male rather than a female pursuit; and so forth.

This idea—that sexual roles are influenced by biology rather than "society"—put the early sociobiologists directly in the path of an oncoming freight train named feminism. In academic circles, sociobiology was savaged as a new form of fascism, an apologia for the "patriarchy," a defense of the sexual status quo. Every trait that the biologists argued had an evolutionary significance or hereditary basis, the feminists argued was due to the persistence of a socially constructed pattern of male domination. If it was nearly impossible to find a single society that was a true matriarchy, or in which women were more violent than men, or in which older women routinely married younger men rather than the reverse, that was only because males everywhere and at all times enforced rules advantageous to themselves.

Since the 1970's, sociobiology has gone underground and changed its name, reemerging as evolutionary psychology or evolutionary anthropology. By now, however, the consistencies in animal behavior that have been uncovered by this line of research have become too striking even for the forces of political correctness to repress. The spectacular success of the "micro" stream in showing the genetic basis for many physiological and psychological outcomes may also have contributed to making it plausible that genetic determination might extend to society as well. It seems very likely that the micro and macro streams will converge in the next generation, when a complete mapping of the genome will allow biologists to link both individual and social behaviors directly to specific genes.

Finally, in addition to results at the micro and macro levels of research, biology offers something else of potential value to social scientists, whether or not they choose to pay any heed. Biological systems are much more complex than any machine designed by man, and yet they are not the products of deliberate design or control. The behavior of a swarm of bees, for example, is not directed by the queen or any other member of the hive; it simply "emerges" out of the relatively simple rules programmed into each individual bee. Similarly, the fantastically complex termite mounds of Africa, complete with forms of plumbing and air conditioning, are created by extremely small creatures with very limited neurological systems. Throughout nature, large and impressive structures emerge out of the interaction of individuals following relatively simple rules of behavior. At places like the Santa Fe Institute, biologists using powerful computers now model this interaction to show how, in "complex adaptive systems," unexpected patterns of highly organized behavior can evolve out of seemingly small changes in the rules.

Interestingly enough, this biological "metaphor" has spread beyond its laboratory origins to become a fad in certain management-consulting circles, with firms like Ernst & Young or Michael Rothschild's Bionomics Institute advising companies on how to organize themselves "biologically," that is, with a minimum of top-down controls. In the information-technology industry, the Internet is often seen as an example of an "emergent system" that has grown through decentralized adaptation rather than through the centralized planning characteristic of a traditional telecommunications company. Believers in free markets have also been drawn to the image of complex adaptive systems, since markets themselves can be seen as resource allocators whose social efficiency emerges, unplanned, out of the interaction of individual economic agents pursuing narrower agendas of their own. In short, the biological metaphor offers a suggestive way of conceiving the entire sphere of human activity.

What, then, does the new biology tell us about culture and society—and, just as important, what does it not tell us? To begin with, it should be clear that there is no simple transition from a biological "is" to a social "ought." Our current genetic structure evolved into roughly its current form during the hundreds of thousands of years that human beings were living in hunter-gatherer societies. As Lionel Tiger has pointed out, our basic emotional structure is geared to dealing with near kin and social groups of no more than 40 or 50 people, and yet we live today in large, anonymous cities with populations in the millions, pay allegiance to impersonal laws, and obey uniformed strangers. Nor does biology dictate a clear set of moral rules: while there may be a biological basis for social virtues like love and reciprocity, biology is also the seedbed of rage, jealousy, aggression, and violence.

In fact, what the new biology tells us is that the *capacity* for culture—in the sense of shared behavioral rules passed down socially rather than genetically—is itself a constituent part of human nature. This is good news, even for social constructionists. The ability to create new rules in response to

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changes in the environment, and to pass on these rules through language and learning, may not be quite so uniquely human as was once thought—"cultural" behavior has been observed in other primate species, too—but that ability guarantees greater variability among human groups than among species lacking the same capacity. Paradoxically, therefore, the new biology leaves individual free will and personal responsibility intact: a creature as dependent for survival as man is on learning, intelligence, and consciousness can obviously shape his own destiny to a considerable degree.

Nevertheless, biology also tells us that human nature is not *infinitely* plastic, which is why a man of the Left like Stephen Jay Gould is so hostile to evolutionary psychology. The limits of social engineering are nowhere clearer than in the realm of gender and family relations. Despite being told by a generation of ideologues that they are psychologically no different from men, women continue to show, on the whole, a greater orientation toward children than do their male counterparts; by the same token, despite the "feminization" of masculine mores, men continue to be responsible for the overwhelming proportion of crimes and aggressive behavior. The new biology suggests the reason why these differences persist: they are rooted in genetics, rather than in a "sexual identity" that is merely socially constructed.

Not that the new biology sanctifies any particular form of family structure; these structures vary across cultures, across time in Western societies, and across species. What it does suggest is that kinship in the human species has a biological function: the protection of the mother-child relationship through social rules that direct male economic resources to that end. And it suggests that we tamper with that function at our peril. From the standpoint of the new biology, it is to be expected that once women can earn their own incomes and control their own reproductive cycles through birth control, men will regard this as a liberation and, following their own "reproductive strategies," seek out other sexual and emotional opportunities. It is similarly to be expected that once we fail adequately to socialize young males to control their tendencies toward violence and aggression, we are, as Daniel Patrick Moynihan has put it, "asking for trouble."

WHEN IT comes to the political organization of society, the new biology harbors a number of interesting implications. If genes (or the sequences of genes that determine a particular behavior) are selfish, and survive because they possess qualities that allow them to pass on copies of themselves to successive generations, it follows that human societies created on the opposite premise—namely, that men and women possess unlimited reservoirs of altruistic feeling which can be manipulated toward some larger end—will collapse on themselves within a couple of generations. Such, indeed, is the experience of Marxism in our century. If anything, the new biology would thus seem to lend intellectual support to classical liberalism, which operates on the premise that man in the state of nature is an isolated and selfish individual, coming together with other individuals in markets or civil society primarily as a means to satisfy his wants and needs.

But this is not quite right, either, since in the new biology the "individuals" in question are genes, or gene sequences, which can be shared among different organisms. The British biologist William Hamilton developed in the 1960's a theory of "inclusive fitness" to explain the apparent altruism exhibited by social organisms like bees and wasps, whose behavior had stumped Darwin himself for many years (and delayed publication of *The Origin of the Species*). According to this theory, altruism tends to be proportional to the *number* of shared genes, which would help explain the emotions that biological kin feel toward one another. But individuals may also develop altruistic feelings for strangers: in the judgment of Robert Trivers, another biologist, reciprocity—returning a favor for a favor and a harm for a harm—is not a learned behavior but something hard-wired into the human genome since, after all, it ultimately improves an individual's long-run chances of survival.

Sociability, in other words, like the capacity for culture, may well be a constituent part of human nature, oriented not (as Marx believed) toward the species in some abstract way but rather toward kin, friends, and those with whom one has exchanged favors. While specific moral rules may vary from society to society, the capacity for moral choice itself, and the emotions like guilt and shame that are connected with their violation, are not learned solely through cultural transmission but are genetically inherited. What a culture can do is to build on this "moral sense," as James Q. Wilson has called it, in order to reinforce altruistic tendencies and to control other biological drives toward aggression and violence.

AT THIS point the reader may be left wondering why we need a new science to tell us the utterly commonsensical truths that we are better disposed by nature to family and friends than to "so-

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ciety" as a whole; that men and women are different; and that moral rules have to supplement natural instincts.

The answer, as we have seen, lies in the politics of science. As a result of their misuse by racists, imperialists, and ultimately the Nazis, biology and the very concept of human nature were progressively purged from the received understanding of how society works and, no less crucially, should work. Unfortunately, however, the banning of biology did not immunize us from totalitarian horrors; on the contrary, the view that human nature is limitlessly plastic helped lead to the monstrosities of rationalistic social engineering attempted by Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot. One might thus say that the barbarisms of our century can be located between these two diametrically opposed views of the relationship of biology to society.

We will have made some progress, then, if social theories and social policy alike can come to be based on the truly commonsensical view that human behavior is shaped by some combination of biology and environment, and that nature and nurture interact in complex ways that are not always (or even usually) predictable by social scientists. Unfortunately, the pendulum as it swings back may not come to rest in the center. Biology, rather, seems poised to achieve a new status as *the* dominant explanatory factor in human behavior. As with cultural relativism before, all sorts of purposes, from the commercial to the political and the ideological, stand ready to be subsumed under its banner.

One can see this already in the reporting on genetic research, where a gene that has been shown to have some small but statistically significant correlation with obesity is described confidently and sweepingly as a "fat" gene. One can see it in the way that proponents of gay rights swing in one breath from passionate espousal of the view that homosexuality is an "identity" constructed by society to passionate espousal of the view that homosexuality is wholly genetic in origin and wholly outside the control of the individual. And one can see it in a book like Frank Sulloway's recent *Born to Rebel: Birth Order, Family Dynamics, and Creative Lives*, in which a genetically programmed response to birth order becomes the central factor explaining whether historical personalities are "creative" (good) or supporters of the status quo (bad).*

Just as people excuse themselves today by saying that "society made me do it," tomorrow they are likely to plead that "my genes made me do it," and to find support in the expert testimony of a host of biologists armed with charts and statistical regressions. As knowledge of the genome improves, as gene therapy for specific disorders becomes possible and eventually widespread, as genetic engineering moves from cotton and sheep to human beings, it seems all but inevitable that the hubris of biologists will increase commensurately. Biology's return out of the wilderness is in many respects a welcome thing; but what new and unexpected political and social calamities will arise from it we can only guess.

* For a discussion of *Born to Rebel*, see Joseph Epstein's article, "O, Brother!," in the April Commentary.—Ed.

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Why Welfare Reform Is Working

Daniel Casse

On July 1, the "end of welfare as we know it" began in earnest. On that day, the federal legislation that President Clinton had signed nearly a year earlier went into effect, terminating a 62-year-old federal entitlement and creating, for the first time, a limit on how long one can receive federal welfare assistance.

In Washington, however, it seems impossible to leave well enough alone. Clinton himself had promised last year to "fix" troublesome portions of the welfare law, and by the end of July, as Congress passed a balanced-budget plan, it became apparent that the law's implementation was still susceptible of political manipulation. In the final days of negotiation over the budget, a passive Republican Congress and a politically alert White House began diluting the potent formula conceived and signed a year earlier and in effect for all of three weeks.

These eleventh-hour changes are not insignificant. But they should not obscure the larger achievement. The welfare-reform legislation that went into effect on July 1 is the most far-reaching policy move of the Clinton presidency—and also, to date, the most successful. Not surprisingly, the President used his July 4 national radio address to crow about it. Since he took office in January 1993, he announced, three million fewer people were on the welfare rolls. Even more impressive was the fact that an astonishing 1.2 million had come off the rolls in the first nine months since the welfare-reform legislation passed Congress and before it formally went into effect. Using rhetoric that was once the preserve of conservative polemicists, the President told the nation on July 4 that "we have begun to put an end to the culture of dependency, and to elevate our values of family, work, and responsibility."

In truth, the legislation itself deserves only part of the credit. Earlier this year, the President's own Council of Economic Advisers concluded that the drop in the number of people on welfare was due in some measure to the healthy economy and also to the wide variety of initiatives that had emerged over the last few years at the state level. We have, indeed, never witnessed such a fertile period of experimentation, with dozens of state legislatures trying new ways to move people off government assistance and onto a path of self-sufficiency. Most of these former recipients have gone successfully into full- or part-time jobs, while others, recognizing the new demands the local welfare office will soon place on them, have voluntarily dropped out of the system. With the more comprehensive measures of the federal law now taking effect—and notwithstanding the deleterious changes introduced in the balanced-budget negotiations—we have every reason to expect that these trends will continue.

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Not everyone is rejoicing, to be sure. The hand-wringing among some conservatives over the last-minute changes smuggled in by the White House in late July is one thing; but it pales in comparison to the deep distress which the legislation, amended or unamended, has brought to liberal policy circles, not to mention the real rifts which the President's support for welfare reform has caused within his own party. For those who have not wanted to hear that the era of big government is over, the welfare-reform bill has been, indeed, a bitter pill to swallow.

That may explain why, from the beginning, those opposed to the plan repeatedly resorted to a kind of demagoguery that was shameless even by Washington standards. Thus, when the first round of legislation began moving through the Republican-controlled Congress in 1994, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan boldly predicted that the result would be "scenes of social trauma such as we haven't known since the cholera epidemics." Not to be outdone, Senator Edward M. Kennedy called an early version of the reform bill "legislative child-abuse."

By the summer of 1996, when it was clear that a bipartisan coalition existed for replacing the federal welfare entitlement with state block grants, time limits, and work requirements, still more alarms were set off. The Urban Institute warned that one million children would fall into poverty, the *New York Times* condemned the bill as "atrocious," and Moynihan pronounced it "an obscene act of social regression." Finally, days after the President signed the legislation, two of his top policy appointees at the Department of Health and Human Services resigned in protest. One of them, Peter Edelman, waited less than six months before publishing an article in the *Atlantic* calling the welfare-reform plan "the worst thing Bill Clinton has done." As Edelman saw it, the new legislation offered a grim future for America's poor:

> [T]here will be suffering. . . . There will be more malnutrition and more crime, increased infant mortality and increased drug and alcohol abuse. There will be increased family violence and abuse against children and women, and a consequent spillover of the problem into the already overloaded child-welfare system and battered-women's shelters.

Today, a year after the legislation was signed, there is scant evidence of a looming crisis, yet the predictions of gloom, albeit somewhat less hysterical in tone, have continued to pour in. In the *American Prospect*, the eminent social scientist Christopher Jencks has forecast that without a well-funded system of public employment, "states will either have to fudge their time limits or let a lot of destitute families break up." Writing in response to Jencks, Kimberly Christensen has suggested that he is too optimistic. "Many abused women," she charges, "will eventually lose their benefits for nonattendance at workfare placements, or reach the [time] limit, with disastrous results for themselves and their children." To the *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne, echoing what has become a conventional liberal criticism, "the danger of the reforms is not that they will force people to work but that people will be forced off the rolls without work to go to." And in the August 4 *New Republic*, a pair of articles warns that the new law, for all its early success, is unlikely to help the most disadvantaged among us.

Quite obviously, no one knows at this early stage what the ultimate effect of welfare reform will be. But the critics, having lost the legislative battle, now seem determined to convince us that without a massive infusion of new federal funds, the nation's poor are headed pell-mell toward cruel deprivation and suffering. Fortunately for the country, the facts suggest otherwise.

THE PERSONAL Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 passed both Houses of Congress with considerable bipartisan support. Like all such sweeping pieces of legislation, it makes changes to numerous federal laws and regulations. But the bulk of the legislation is directed at Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the Roosevelt-era assistance program that was the target of most of the growing public dissatisfaction with welfare. The new law effectively repeals AFDC and replaces it with a new program known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). In addition, the law introduces four fundamental changes that distinguish it from every attempt at welfare reform that has come before.

First, it ends the federal entitlement to cash assistance. In the past, eligibility for this assistance was means-tested: anyone meeting the income requirements was automatically qualified. Under the new law, each state determines eligibility. Second, the new law gives a block grant to each of the 50 states, permitting it to design a cash-assistance program as it sees fit. Third, the law establishes a five-year lifetime limit on cash assistance and a two-year limit on receiving assistance without working, thus

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ensuring that welfare cannot become a way of life. Finally, the law requires each state to craft work requirements as part of its welfare program. By the year 2002, states will need to show that at least 50 percent of those receiving welfare are involved in some form of work or training in exchange for benefits.

These changes all come with a catalogue of exemptions, qualifications, and alternative requirements in special cases—a flexibility that guarantees that the actual programs will vary considerably from state to state. The law will not, for example, "throw a million children into poverty." States can exempt 20 percent of their caseload from the time limit, and also convert block-grant money into vouchers for children after their families have reached the limit. Even when the federal limits are triggered, states can continue to spend their own money helping poor families (as they do now). And states may exempt parents of infants from all work requirements, while single parents with children under six will be asked to work only part-time.

Although one would never know it from the critics, left untouched by this reform are a host of poverty-assistance programs. Medicaid, a program still in need of reform, continues to provide health coverage to all poor families under the new welfare law. Public-housing programs remain in effect, as do child-nutrition programs and the Earned Income Tax Credit. The food-stamp program will continue to grow, if at a slower rate. Again contrary to what has been charged, children with serious long-term medical conditions and disabilities will *not* lose their Supplemental Security Income aid; the new law merely narrows the definition of "disability" to exclude some purely behavioral problems.

Most of the bill's critics have also misunderstood the financing behind it. According to the *Washington Post*, the new law "hands the problem to the states and fails to equip them with the resources to solve" it. In fact, the bill represents a giant windfall for state welfare spending. The block grants replacing the old, formula-driven AFDC payments have been fixed at 1994 spending levels—but in the meantime, as the President reminded us in his July 4 radio address, the welfare caseload across the nation has been dropping dramatically. (In Maryland, Oregon, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, and Michigan, the AFDC caseload has shrunk by 20 to 30 percent in the past two years alone.) For many states, then, the new block grants, financed on the basis of the more crowded welfare rolls of two years ago, represent a significant hike in funding—hardly the outcome one would anticipate from a Republican Congress routinely described as mean-spirited, heartless, and insensitive to the needs of the poor.

BUT MOST confounding of all to critics of the bill, and most heartening to its supporters, is the fact that welfare reform, in its embryonic stages, has wildly surpassed expectations. In April of this year, eleven million people were on welfare, the lowest share of the U.S. population since 1970. Nor have any of the widely predicted nightmare scenarios materialized. Even in cities like Milwaukee, where thousands of welfare recipients have dropped off the rolls in the last two years, local shelters and food banks have reported no new surges in demand for their services.

What accounts for these early signs of success? Following the lead of the Council of Economic Advisers, some have suggested that the drop in caseloads is traceable entirely to the current strength of the economy. But this cannot be right. The economy has indeed been strong; yet previous cycles of prosperity have failed to produce anything close to the reductions we see today.

What is different, clearly, is that the *rules* governing welfare dependence have started to change. Indeed, they started to change well before the federal law was passed last year. Impatient with Washington's habitual inaction, both Democratic and Republican governors began introducing time limits, work requirements, and rules designed to promote responsibility in their own state systems. The burgeoning economy has made their work easier, but there is no denying that in states where the rules have changed, the lives and behavior of welfare recipients have also changed, and for the better.

Wisconsin's much-touted reforms are a case in point. In a detailed study published in *Policy Review*, Robert Rector has shown how two new programs in that state, Self-Sufficiency First and Pay for Performance, fundamentally altered the relationship between welfare recipients and government. Implemented in April 1996, the programs required recipients to work in the private sector or perform community service, attend remedial-education classes, or participate in a supervised job search in exchange for AFDC payments or food stamps. Those who did not want to work, take classes, or look for a job were no longer eligible for payments. Seven months after the programs began, the AFDC caseload had dropped 33 percent.

Recent experience in Tennessee, though less widely reported, is no less impressive. As it hap-

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pens, Tennessee is not subject to the provisions of the new federal law, having won prior approval for an equally comprehensive program of its own. Like the federal law, the Tennessee plan, known as Families First, replaces AFDC with a cash-assistance program that requires recipients to work, go to school, or train while working part-time. Tennessee exempts almost a third of its welfare recipients from the time limits (and from some of the work requirements), and in that respect its plan is even more flexible than the federal law. On the other hand, Tennessee imposes a tighter restriction on the number of consecutive months welfare recipients can receive cash benefits. Finally, everyone eligible for benefits, even if exempt from the work requirements and the time limits, must sign a "personal-responsibility contract" outlining the steps to be taken toward self-sufficiency.

In the first six months of the program, 19,000 Tennesseans left the welfare rolls—a 21-percent drop, unprecedented in the state's history. What makes this reduction more remarkable still is that during these early months no one was being forcibly removed from the rolls by an arbitrary cut-off date. Instead, social-service officials in Tennessee discovered that the mere requirement to show up at a welfare office, sign a statement of personal responsibility, and participate in a work or educational program had a dramatic impact on the lives of people accustomed to receiving a government check without anything being asked of them at all.

Tennessee officials broke down the declining caseload to understand what was taking place. The results are revealing: 5,800 recipients asked that their cases be closed within the first month ("I don't want to be bothered," was a common response). Another 5,500 found work and earned enough money to make them ineligible. Almost a third either refused to sign the personal-responsibility contract, or failed to comply with its terms, or refused to attend classes or begin a job search. The rest moved out of the state. As for those still receiving cash assistance, many appear to be enthusiastically pursuing a route to independence. In the first six months of Families First, 18 percent of this group had found full-time employment; 22 percent were in training or were looking for a job; 19 percent were pursuing adult education; 6 percent had gotten some form of employment mixed with training.

Tennessee's record so far vividly contradicts the most prevalent and longstanding liberal criticism of a decentralized welfare system: that it will spur a "race to the bottom" among the states. Harvard's David Ellwood, who served as an assistant secretary of Health and Human Services and was a point man for the administration's welfare-reform plans before quitting in frustration, has made this criticism most explicitly:

> History is filled with examples of states choosing to ignore poor families or ignoring racial minorities, regions, or types of families. Moreover, if one state's rules differ markedly from those of another, there will be an incentive for migration. It is a lot easier to move poor people from welfare to the state border than from welfare to work. Needs and resources also differ widely across states. The states with the smallest tax base are usually the states with the greatest proportion of poor children and families. Fearful of becoming "welfare magnets," some states may cut benefits and impose more punitive measures than they would otherwise prefer.

On almost every point, the Tennessee example has disproved Ellwood and those who repeat his arguments. Tennessee, a relatively poor Southern state, is also no stranger to racial tensions. With no state income tax, a lean state budget, a recent history of political corruption, and a strong Republican tilt in recent elections, it would hardly seem an ideal candidate for meaningful welfare reform. Yet Tennessee's program *has* promoted work and independence without suddenly snatching away the safety net. Moreover, as part of its reform initiative, the state legislature has actually increased spending on welfare by 22 percent since 1994. Nor is Tennessee unique in this respect. The *New York Times* recently reported that, to the surprise of anti-poverty advocates, state legislatures, flush with federal dollars from the welfare-reform bill, have been spending money on day-care services, emergency loans for car repairs, and free subway passes, all designed to make it easier for welfare recipients to find work.

NONE OF this is to say that the bill initially passed by Congress and signed by the President last year was without significant flaws or risks. Undoubtedly, the most egregious and widely publicized clause was the one denying benefits to poor, elderly immigrants who were already legally residing in the country. At a cost of $12 billion, July's budget agreement has repaired this defect by applying restrictions to future immigrants only, thereby retaining the legitimate purpose of dis-

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couraging future welfare-seekers from coming to the U.S. without penalizing new, legal residents.

As for the risks, no one knows how states will manage if regional economies start to fizzle, depriving former welfare recipients of their jobs. Nor can we be sure state programs will discourage *new* entrants to the welfare system as successfully as they have been moving people off. There is also reason to question whether work requirements will deter out-of-wedlock births, which is bound to be a major criterion in judging their success.

Still, the early stages of state reform have already told us volumes about the American welfare population itself, and this will be of inestimable value in addressing the dilemmas of the future. Over the decades, as the evidence of a crisis mounted, it had become customary to speak of this population as if it were a single class of people exhibiting a uniform set of behaviors, motivations, and responses to public policy. If the last few months have taught us anything, it is that welfare recipients are a varied lot.

At one end of the spectrum are those who are unlikely ever to find or hold a job, or to lead a life free of government support. They are the disabled, the chronically ill, and those with severe learning problems or long-term histories of drug and alcohol abuse. They have often been on AFDC without interruption for many years, even decades; their families may have been on AFDC for generations. No mix of carrots and sticks is likely to move such people from welfare to independence. In virtually every state they will be exempt from welfare requirements—quite sensibly so—and continue to depend on government support.

Then there is the opposite end of the spectrum: the considerable portion of the welfare population, perhaps as many as 30 percent, who are easily moved off the rolls at the slightest prompting. Many may have already been in the workforce at some point or other (or may have been defrauding the system by working and collecting welfare simultaneously); when compelled to comply with tighter rules, they simply stop showing up for their check. Others move readily into the workforce when they need to. Still others, as we have seen in Tennessee, would rather drop out of the system than be held accountable for their daily activities. Although some of these welfare recipients may find themselves falling back onto government assistance after a short period of time, they are among those best-equipped to move off welfare permanently, and a well-designed program may be all the motivation they need for long-term self-reliance.

BETWEEN THESE two groups are those who are neither highly motivated nor completely incapable of self-sufficiency. Almost all the major efforts in the months ahead will be focused on this group. But consider how much more doable the task has become. To critics, most of the success so far is attributable to "cherry picking." As the *New Republic* put it dramatically on the cover of its August 4 issue: "Welfare Reform Has Moved More Than a Million People Off the Rolls. But Those Were the Easy Cases." This, however, is wide of the mark; the fact that the states have a significantly smaller caseload to work with means they can devote more money to each family struggling to get off welfare. Policy-makers have never enjoyed this luxury before.

How should the money be spent? There is, unfortunately, no proven formula. Many states will no doubt invest millions of dollars in job training and preparedness programs. But the evidence that these can lead to success is, at best, mixed. Thus, the Job Training Partnership Act, one of the largest government-funded training programs, has led to some improvement in women's earnings but very little in men's. Similarly unencouraging is a recent study of New Chance, a program operating in twelve U.S. cities and designed to help teenage mothers gain self-sufficiency. Although New Chance spent approximately $9,000 per mother on education, training, child care, parenting skills, and health care, the study (conducted by the same corporation that designed the program) found that these young mothers were no more likely than before to find a job, leave welfare, or delay future pregnancies.

More hopeful are initiatives to replace training and counseling with real work, or at least rigorous preparation for work. In a recent book, *It Takes a Nation*, Rebecca Blank, an intelligent critic of the legislation passed by Congress, concedes that for welfare recipients with minimal job experience, some time at work often proves far more effective than months of training or classroom education. The work environment introduces into their lives a higher level of accountability and stimulates them to acquire more training if they want to move up the ladder. Most important, job placement and work programs shift the relationship between welfare recipients and their local social-service agency. Putting someone in a job is an entirely different mandate from merely certifying his eligibility for cash benefits, and the change is beneficial to both sides.

The most frequent question raised by skeptics is

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how welfare recipients will find employment. Following the lead of critics like Christopher Jencks, liberals now propose the creation of thousands of public-sector jobs as the only way to absorb the welfare population into the workforce. States that heed their advice, however, will quickly discover that these programs are expensive and extraordinarily difficult to manage. The history of similar efforts at the federal level—most notoriously, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA)—confirms the folly of replacing one welfare system with another that goes by a different name.

Nevertheless, there may be a virtue in putting people in some form of *temporary* public-sector workfare or community service. As Robert Rector has pointed out, Wisconsin has created thousands of such jobs, not for make-work but to establish the principle of pay for performance. The same model is now to be seen in other states and cities, including New York, where more than half of the public-park workers are welfare recipients earning their benefits. Ironically, though, this quintessential New Deal-style program has also enraged liberals. In July, a coalition of New York churches, synagogues, and nonprofit groups, evidently oblivious to the social destruction the city's *existing* welfare system has wrought, announced that its members would not offer workfare positions to welfare recipients, on the grounds that the program is tantamount to slavery.

Such moral posturing aside, it is true that mandatory public-work programs are not always ideal: under them, many older, laid-off skilled workers may be forced to do menial labor in order to gain temporary cash assistance while seeking a new job. But the vast majority of welfare recipients do not have the skills or wherewithal to enter the job market on their own—they are predominantly young women who have never held a full- *or* part-time job—and for them, programs that demand work in exchange for cash harbor a twofold benefit. First, they habituate a welfare recipient to the norms of the workplace: arriving on time, following instructions, working with others, and so on. Second, by transforming welfare itself, they make it a far less attractive option for a young woman who might once have seen AFDC as a way out of the world of adult responsibility.

IT CANNOT be stressed enough that the current round of welfare reform is different from all that have preceded it. In the past, reform initiatives simply added a labyrinth of incentives to what remained, at heart, a system of entitlements. Work programs, counseling, job searches, child care, and transportation subsidies are surely limited tools if the recipient knows that at the end of the day, there will be no penalty for failing to respond to the rules and incentives. And the most able welfare recipients *always* knew how to "game" the system.

That is why a legal work requirement and a clear time limit for cash assistance are so crucial. Without the certainty of a fixed cutoff date, workfare programs of the past invariably devolved into another form of open-ended government job training that did little to move the trainee into a real job. The key to the current reform is that it promotes self-sufficiency by *removing* welfare as a long-term alternative.

And that, regrettably, is also where the changes introduced in this July's budget agreement are likely to do the most damage. A number of state governors have reacted to these changes by charging that the President has effectively undermined the whole thrust of the legislation. "Even Democratic governors are screaming he's all but killed it," wrote the columnist Paul Gigot in the *Wall Street Journal*.

There is much justice in the governors' complaints. The administration's $3-billion Welfare-to-Work program, for example, was stuffed into the July budget agreement as a payoff to big-city mayors who had been left out of the welfare-reform process. Federal funding for yet another unproven job-preparedness initiative like this one runs counter to the main intent of welfare reform, which is (again) to require work, not training, in exchange for a government check. By permitting such alternatives to thrive, the administration has succeeded in creating yet more loopholes for welfare recipients—the very thing that has repeatedly undone past efforts at reform.

But the administration's attempt to roll back or qualify the progress that has been made has taken on an even more disturbing aspect. Both the President and his Department of Labor have begun to insist that all work performed by welfare recipients, even those in community-service jobs, must be treated as "employment" and therefore subject to the panoply of federal labor regulations. Such an interpretation not only runs contrary to 30 years of sensible precedent, but, by asserting a new and intrusive federal role, it has the very real potential to prevent every new state workfare program from getting off the ground. If the administration has its way, more than two dozen federal requirements would be placed on any workfare position, including the payment of minimum wages (and prevail-

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ing wages in construction jobs), payroll taxes for employers, workers'-compensation programs, and so on. It would be hard to conceive a greater obstacle in the path of programs that were intended, after all, to help those most unlikely to find work in the private sector.

AS THE Republican Congress was notably unenthusiastic about fighting off these rearguard actions against a bill it spent two years struggling to pass, it will now be up to state governments to challenge ongoing efforts to exert federal control over workfare. Still, these legal and technical issues, and others like them, are *all* that remains of the welfare discussion. Which means that the larger debate that began in the early 1980's is finally over. That debate has been decisively lost by those who wanted to cling to a system with a guaranteed federal entitlement for the poor. Still to be seen is the extent to which the new state policies will succeed; but whatever the final consequences, it is unlikely we will ever return to the old model.

Indeed, together with the defeat of national health-care legislation in 1994, the passage of welfare reform represents the second major body blow to big-government liberalism during the Clinton presidency. Interestingly, some liberals who have chosen to make their peace with welfare reform have taken to arguing that by ending the country's old and highly unpopular policy, President Clinton has actually set the stage for a *revival* of liberalism. Mickey Kaus, for example, one of the most persuasive liberal advocates of the new reforms, is now trying to cast them as a defeat for conservative governance. "Liberals," he wrote in the *New York Times* last year, "can now rebuild an active government on a more defensible foundation"—because the states, having gained control of the purse-strings, are outdoing even Washington in spending money to help the poor.

But quite apart from the question of whether levels of spending are the right criterion by which to judge the prospects of liberalism, Kaus's argument misses the essential point. It is a mistake to believe that the welfare debate was ever about the amount of money the country was spending. If, over the last 30 years, billions of dollars had gone into a poverty-assistance program that had actually helped to foster stable families, safe and clean public housing, higher achievement in education, and a reduction in illegitimate births, no one would ever have complained about a welfare "crisis" in the first place. Money alone was never the problem.

Instead, what distinguishes the current reform is that it has forced both federal and state governments to take seriously the idea that welfare policy can deter, or encourage, behavior. The fact that Tennessee will increase welfare spending this year tells us nothing in itself. But the fact that Tennessee now holds parents accountable for their children's immunizations and school attendance; that it forces teen parents to stay in school and live at home or with a guardian; and that it provides no additional benefits for single mothers who have additional children while on welfare, means that government is no longer indifferent to the way welfare recipients live and raise their children. All this represents a stark departure from the liberalism that has dominated government policy toward the poor for the last three decades.

Changing the way the poor behave may not make them prosperous, and there will always be critics to insist that until poverty is eradicated, no program can claim success. But by eliminating the certainty that one will be paid whether or not one works or seeks work, we have already taken the most important step on the road toward the end of welfare—and of liberalism—as we have known them.

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Sex, Lies, and Infantry

Walter A. McDougall

In a tender love song from the late 1970's, Bob Dylan asked, "Can you cook and sew and make flowers grow, do you understand my pain?" The line outraged feminists. To the ensuing barrage of criticism, the somewhat shaken but unrepentant songwriter replied: yes, women should be free to do whatever they liked, but "when a man says he's looking for a good woman, he isn't looking for an airline pilot."

Two decades later, all manner of media are laboring to purge Americans of such benighted attitudes, and all manner of American institutions are breathlessly acquiescing. The title of one of my five-year-old daughter's favorite bedtime books is *Maybe You Should Fly a Jet*, and the cover shows a woman—a blonde, glamorous woman—at the controls. Children's television programs invariably depict female doctors, police, and mechanics; presidents of women's colleges deplore the fact that one in eight teenage girls still hopes for a career in modeling; and the United States Army encourages women to "be all you can be" by trading cosmetics and cars for camouflage paint and helicopters.

Indeed, one of the central goals of the feminist movement is to establish a fully sexually-integrated military, trained, fit, and ready to engage in combat. To the advocates of this cause, it is an outrage that the United States is not moving at a rapid *enough* pace in their direction; but the truth is that it has moved very swiftly indeed. Thanks to feminism, and thanks as well to the all-too-explicable silence of the officer corps, a new, strange—and deeply troubled—future has arrived for the American military.

Women have participated in all of America's wars. In World War II, some 350,000 Wacs, Waves, and nurses saw active service; but they never carried rifles or other arms, and of course their numbers paled beside the millions of male veterans of that war. Only since 1975 has the Pentagon recruited large numbers of women in peacetime. Today, they comprise 14 percent of military personnel, and they perform duties that place them near, at, and, beginning in the 1980's, across the front line.

Creating a sizable female contingent in the military was hardly President Richard Nixon's intention when in 1970 he announced a plan to abolish the draft and create an All-Volunteer Force (AVF). The commission which drew up the blueprint for the AVF calculated that higher pay and other material inducements would suffice to attract a high number of (male) soldiers; it did not even discuss the recruitment of women, which at the time was a non-issue. But in the wake of the Vietnam war, with the morale of the military shot, and the youth

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of the Make-Love-Not-War and Me generations resisting appeals based on patriotism and self-interest alike, male enlistment plummeted. Worse, a good many of those who did sign up were of inferior physical and intellectual quality. To make the AVF succeed, the Defense Department began to accept women, and not merely as auxiliaries but as regular troops serving beside men in all military-occupational specialties save those involving heavy labor or combat.

Having said A, however, the military very quickly came under fierce pressure to say B. On what basis could female soldiers and sailors be barred from "getting their tickets punched" and proving their mettle in those branches of the service that have always represented the fast track to high honors and rank, where aspiring admirals and generals earn their spurs? The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service (DACOWITS), set up in 1951 to help recruit female auxiliaries during the Korean war, became by the 1970's an assertive lobby on behalf of the full integration of the military by sex. Year after year, its exclusively civilian membership pressured the armed forces and Congress to open a greater range of military-occupational specialties to women, to counter sexual harassment, to reeducate males who objected to the expansion of women's roles, and—fatefully—to design separate (and unequal) standards of training to ensure that women recruits, no matter how faltering their performance, would not fail.

A key if not the decisive turning point came in 1975, when Congress obliged the service academies—the Army's at West Point, the Navy's at Annapolis, and the Air Force's at Colorado Springs—to admit women and treat them as equals to men. Needless to say, most of the females in the entering classes were physically not as strong as their male counterparts, and were certainly not at home in the boot-camp/college-fraternity environment of the academies. In the early years, these female students either suffered in silence or washed out. But among the male cadets there was simmering resentment, both at the lowering of standards and at the abolition of treasured traditions, all to make a handful of young women feel at home.

The rancor boiled over in 1979, when seniors at West Point openly advertised themselves as "the last class with balls." The military brass, which lived in fear of DACOWITS, rushed to the barricades bearing a document entitled "Institutional Plans to Overcome Sexism." Soon all the services were running sensitivity-training programs; rapidly relegated to the past were the hazing and physical challenges that had formerly been employed to instill camaraderie, confidence, and courage in officers-to-be.

The 1980's, under Presidents Reagan and Bush, saw another turning point. This one resulted not from the steady rise in the percentage of women in the AVF but rather from war. In 1983, American forces invaded Grenada in Operation Urgent Fury; in 1989, they were dispatched to Panama in Operation Just Cause; and finally, in 1991, came the Persian Gulf war. In Grenada and Panama women played a supporting role, but in the war to liberate Kuwait—Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm—servicewomen were engaged in military action as never before. Fifteen were killed, and one, a truck driver, was captured by the enemy and sexually molested.

Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf gave new energy and new arguments to those pressing to eliminate the barriers against women serving in combat units. For one thing, they claimed, the distinction the Pentagon had attempted to draw between support and combat roles was revealed to be untenable. Support soldiers themselves, after all, came under fire and took casualties. For another thing, women soldiers under fire had displayed both skill and courage. For yet another, the public appeared to take in stride the novelty of female casualties and POW's. Finally, the spectacular display of American technological prowess in the Persian Gulf undercut the old assertion that success in combat depended largely on the kind of brute physical strength possessed by men.

By 1993, when the Clinton administration arrived in Washington, these arguments had prevailed. Tossing out a cautious report that had been commissioned by President Bush, Clinton's civilian appointees in the Defense Department ordered the Navy to deploy female sailors on combat ships and the Army to open 35,000 jobs in military-occupation specialties hitherto reserved for men. Although infantry, armor, artillery, combat aviation, and submarines were still off-limits, those pressing for a sexual revolution in the military had won on the key principle. All that remained was a mopping-up operation to conquer the last preserves of male thinking and male privilege.

GIVEN HOW fast and how far women have come in the armed forces, one might think that feminists would be in a celebratory mood. But to judge by a new book by Linda Bird Francke,* a for-

* *Ground Zero: The Gender Wars in the Military.* Simon & Schuster, 304 pp., $25.00.

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mer "Hers" columnist for the *New York Times*, they remain just as agitated and angry as ever. The reason for their anger, according to Francke, is clear: from top to bottom, a male-dominated military establishment persists in its repression and persecution of women, and conspires to protect the few remaining male-only units in the name of a "conservative male culture" that cannot come to terms with the presence of women in the ranks.

For those involved in this campaign, Francke writes, the "weapon of choice" is the fact that some female soldiers get pregnant while on active duty and must leave their units at critical times. To Francke, this is a red herring; the Army, she contends, loses fewer days of service to pregnancy than it does to the drug, alcohol, and disciplinary problems that are so rampant among men. Moreover, although it takes two to make a baby, the services act as if pregnancy were a female problem alone, and fail to hold fathers accountable in any way.

But the underlying problem in Francke's eyes is not pregnancy. It is the retrograde nature of the American military ethos itself, and the "masculine mystique" that guides it. Trainees are taught from the start to despise feminine qualities, and are tagged as "pussies" if they fail to live up to the macho ideal. Sexist "Jody songs" (marching chants) and a "torrent of misogynist and anti-individualist abuse" foster a culture of violence that inevitably leads to harassment and rape. In fact, within such a culture, equal opportunity for women can *never* be achieved: women, Francke concludes, are engaged in an "unwinnable war." No matter how they try to fit in, no matter how often they prove their courage in battle, "the dynamic of white male culture" will not permit military men to accept them as equals.

Francke's show of terminal pessimism is instructive, for in her alternately petulant and haranguing way she has actually begun to put her finger on a central issue. That she does not wish to confront this issue, however, is clear from her one-sided presentation of the facts. Her accounts of female heroism in battle, for example, are only so much embroidery over a severely compromised reality.

Take her extended paean to the combat exploits of Captain Linda Bray, whose military-police unit came under sniper fire while storming a dog kennel in Panama. To Francke, this episode proves that women have what it takes to lead infantry assaults. But a close look at Captain Bray's accomplishment tells us something else. The butcher's bill for the firefight against the undefended kennel was six enemy dead, all of them canine. One need not minimize Captain Bray's bravery under fire to doubt that this episode proves women can or ought to lead infantry assaults as a matter of course. Nor, for that matter, does Francke's tale of how another female officer, also in Panama, disarmed an assailant by giving him a bonk on the head with her canteen. Would that all our country's enemies were so easily cowed.

On the other side of the coin, Francke simply shrugs off the extent of the Navy's unhappy experience with women at sea: during the Persian Gulf war, 10 percent of the female sailors on board the destroyer-tender *USS Acadia* (a.k.a. the "Love Boat") had to be removed on account of pregnancy. She dismisses out of hand the wisdom of sending young mothers to fight and die in war. And she never asks whether mixing the sexes in close quarters might in any way be responsible for the kind of trouble we are witnessing in sex scandal after sex scandal and court martial after court martial. Instead of honestly thinking about what these woes mean and whence they arise, Francke insists that the problem rests entirely with the military's incurably sexist men and the refusal of the Pentagon to accommodate its female soldiers.

In fact, the problem lies elsewhere. Although Francke, along with other feminists, regards the military as just another workplace, the elementary truth is that the United States maintains a military for one purpose and one purpose only: to protect national security. In order to carry out that job, the military prepares for and, if necessary, fights wars. And to ensure that the armed forces can carry out their mission—a mission which demands that soldiers be prepared to risk and to sacrifice their lives—military life is organized according to a rigid hierarchy and a rigid code of discipline.

Is it really necessary to point out the obvious—namely, that when the sexes are put together in close quarters, especially for prolonged intervals or during periods of great tension, courtships, jealousies, and favoritism will arise; hierarchy will disintegrate; codes of conduct will become unenforceable; and fairness and discipline will break down? Although the case of Israel is frequently adduced by proponents of a mixed-sex combat force, in fact the Israeli example proves the opposite. Israel did experiment with such a mixed force in its 1948 war of independence (as did the Soviets, in desperation, in World War II), but combat effectiveness suffered because of the sub-par per-

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formance of some of the women and of almost all the men—who were incorrigibly overprotective of the females fighting next to them. The Israelis quickly reverted to segregated training and all-male combat complements. As Edward Luttwak has put it, "The Army can't do something that eluded the Franciscans. It can't run a mixed monastery."

But that is exactly what the Army is attempting to do, with predictable and widely apparent results. Everyone in the military knows that sexual liaisons are detrimental to order and morale. Everyone knows that pregnancies cause extraordinarily high attrition rates in units attempting to key up for battle—*and* that some servicewoman have courted pregnancy to escape hazardous or inconvenient duty. Everyone knows that to put grizzled sergeants in charge of training nineteen-year-old girls is to invite the former to abuse their authority and the latter to curry favor. And everyone knows that combat units which include women will not perform up to par, whether (as in the Israeli case) because of male overprotectiveness or because of male resentment, or both.

EVERYONE KNOWS—and yet nobody talks, at least in public. "He who is full of courage and *sang-froid* before an enemy battery sometimes trembles before a skirt," Napoleon famously said. And in the Pentagon these days, there is a good deal of trembling. Barbara Pope, Clinton's Assistant Secretary of the Navy, has asserted authoritatively that "We are in the process of weeding out the white male as norm. We're about changing the culture." In such circumstances, to express reservations about sexual integration is, simply, a "career buster." Even those civilian officials critical of the new policy appear unable to speak their minds. When pressed, here is all Caspar Weinberger, Reagan's otherwise sharp-tongued Secretary of Defense, could think to say about placing women in harm's way:

> [E]ither I'm too old-fashioned or something else is wrong with me, but I simply feel that that is not the proper utilization [of women]. And I think, again to be perfectly frank about it and spread all of my old-fashioned views before you, I think women are too valuable to be in combat.

Such flaccid resistance makes a curiously fitting match with the reckless and often flagrantly contradictory arguments of feminists like Linda Bird Francke. On the one hand, they say women can be just as strong and aggressive as men and deserve the chance to prove it; on the other hand, they damn a "masculine" culture that cultivates martial characteristics. On the one hand, they argue that gender roles, being nothing more than a social construct, are infinitely malleable; on the other hand, they lament the fact that the "masculine mystique" is "innate" and, in Francke's words, "can't go away." As the social critic Jean Bethke Elshtain has observed, feminists have

> not quite known whether to fight men or join them; whether to lament sex differences and deny their importance or to acknowledge and even valorize such differences; whether to condemn all wars outright or to extol women's contributions to war efforts.

In fact, feminists do all these things at once, which may help account not only for their own confusion but for the confusion they have sown in the ranks of their putative adversaries.

In the meantime, the unasked question in this so-called debate is why most women want to join the armed forces at all. From what we know about the overwhelming majority, the answer has nothing whatsoever to do with the military's unique mission of fighting wars. Rather, they are attracted to military service because of the decidedly non-military perquisites it offers, including better pay than they could make on the outside, cradle-to-grave government benefits, and education. Most would not volunteer for combat even if they could, and many who are now posted overseas ache for a stable stateside billet.

In other words, the current concentration of women in clerical work, supply, and other rear-echelon jobs is not, as the feminists would have it, the product of a continuing pattern of discrimination in the military but a reflection—with a few prominent exceptions—of the desires of women themselves. Those exceptions—those few women who, for reasons which it is considered bad form to question, want to storm beaches with an M-60 machine gun or bomb Baghdad from a B-2—are what the fever is about. It is for them that the entire defense establishment of the United States is being invited to turn itself upside down and inside out, at a cost in reputation, morale, and, yes, warfighting capacity that no one has begun to estimate.

WRITING IN the 1940's in opposition to the ordination of women as priests, C.S. Lewis argued that the issue was not whether females could perform the caring and instructional mis-

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sions of the clergy as well as or better than men. Rather, the issue was the priesthood itself, which was a burden the Lord had chosen to place upon men. If men had become inadequate to their appointed duty, Lewis wrote, the solution was hardly to call upon those who were not men at all.

Mutatis mutandis, something of the same could be said of our situation today. We arrived at our current military travails for the simple reason that not enough American men could be found to perform a duty that nature has placed on the shoulders of men. If our only solution is to reserve some of the toughest jobs in the military for the fairer sex, then we may soon reach the point where men, as Amelia Earhart predicted in the 1930's, would rather "vacate the arena [of combat] altogether than share it with women." C. S. Lewis, speaking not about priests now but about the modern temperament in general, put the case with lyric precision:

> We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings to be fruitful.

This line of argument, of course, is not likely to appeal to Secretary of Defense William Cohen. He has his flanks to cover; all he can say is, "We are not going to turn back the clock." But Bob Dylan had a line for him, too. "How many times can a man turn his head, pretending he just doesn't see?" The answer is blowin' in the wind.

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OBSERVATIONS

Gödel's Universe

Jeremy Bernstein

IN THE fall of 1957 I began a two-year fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. Although I was by then committed to a career in theoretical physics, I had been a mathematics major in college, and one of the residues of my undergraduate years was a feeling of awe for the work of Kurt Gödel, then a professor at the Institute.

In a brief series of papers written in the early 1930's, when he was in his mid-twenties, Gödel had transformed forever the way we view mathematical truth. Prior to his discoveries, it was generally assumed that mathematical systems—like geometry or the theory of numbers—rested solidly on a foundation of extremely plausible axioms and definitions (for example, that between any two points there is one and only one straight line). These axioms and definitions were in turn connected to mathematical theorems (for example, that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle is 180 degrees) by a stainless-steel webbing of logical argument. What was mathematically true was provable.

What Gödel showed was almost the exact opposite. First, in systems complicated enough to include the usual numbers and their properties, there were necessarily propositions that were, he argued, undecidable. Although they might well be true, no proof of their truth could in principle exist within the system. Moreover, among these undecidable propositions was the consistency of the axioms themselves! You could never demonstrate that your axioms would not lead to a logical catastrophe. You might find one day that the axioms implied both the truth and the falsity of the same proposition. The castle you thought you were living in might turn out to be a house of cards.

I had studied this in college, and it is why I held Gödel in such awe. Although he was in some sense my neighbor at the Institute—his office was in the next building—it would never have occurred to me to visit him there. Not only was he reputed to be "reclusive," I could not imagine what I would have to say to him.

But then J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Institute's director, decided that it might be nice to hold what Radcliffe girls in an earlier age used to call a "jolly-up": a little social gathering where we could all meet each other. It took place, as I recall, in the Institute cafeteria, where the usual suspects—professors, visitors, the odd local—had all been rounded up. And there in the corner, much to my astonishment, was Gödel. I recognized him instantly from his photographs. He was exceedingly thin, and looked Central European in the same way that Kafka looked Central European. Perhaps it was his dark horn-rimmed glasses: I used to wonder if a single factory in Austria had supplied them for the entire Austro-Hungarian empire.

Why Gödel came to this "jolly-up" I cannot guess, but at some point he started to be introduced around—perhaps by Oppenheimer—and soon it was my turn. When I gave him my name he replied: "I knew your father in Vienna."

Here was a proposition that was not only decidable, but decidedly false. My father was a rabbi in

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Rochester, New York, and to the best of my knowledge had never set foot in Vienna. But when I politely pointed this out to Gödel, he repeated, in exactly the same tone of voice, "I knew your father in Vienna." Clearly, whatever the confusion was, it was not going to be resolved at a "jolly-up." I thanked him and he moved on to the next guest.

It took three days before it finally dawned on me whom Gödel had in mind. In the theory of sets—the theory of ensembles of objects—to which he had also made monumental contributions, there is a famous theorem named after Emil Schröder and Felix Bernstein, two German mathematicians. Bernstein, who was some ten years older than Gödel, must have come to Vienna at one time or another, and the two men must have been introduced. So, at least, I surmised: I never got another chance to speak to Gödel and verify my hunch.

ALL THIS came back to me in reading a new biography of Gödel by the mathematical logician John W. Dawson, Jr.,[1] who teaches at Pennsylvania State University. It is with some reluctance that I use the term "new biography," since that may imply a string of previous such studies. In fact, since Gödel's death in 1978, and apart from brief sketches, there has been no biography.[2]

The reasons are not difficult to seek. To write a biography of Gödel, one must really understand what he did, and this is something only a professional mathematician or mathematical philosopher can do. And then there is Gödel's character to deal with.

To call the man "reclusive" is to trivialize the matter. Certainly in the last years of his life, and on and off for most of it, he was a full-blown paranoiac. As far as I know, he granted almost no interviews. From time to time he would respond to inquiries about his life and work, but in many cases his responses were never actually mailed. They were found only after his death in his *Nachlass*, his personal papers. (Dawson has catalogued these, along with the rest of Gödel's unpublished manuscripts.) Among the *Nachlass* were library slips for every book Gödel had checked out of any library since he was a student in Vienna in the 1920's.

Dawson has reassembled Gödel's life and work with understanding and respect. Indeed, one wonders whether, after his biography, there can be another.

KURT GÖDEL was born in Brno, Moravia, on April 28, 1906. He was baptized a Lutheran even though both his parents were non-Lutheran Christians—a fact I mention only because later in his career some people (including Bertrand Russell) seem to have assumed that he was Jewish. As far I can tell from Dawson's book, there was no indication in the family of any special genius for mathematics (this, by the way, was also true in Einstein's family), although the young Gödel was, as one might expect, an excellent student. He also began early on to exhibit the kind of detachment and withdrawal that would characterize his adult life.

In 1924, Gödel entered the University of Vienna. It was his intention to study physics, but after a couple of years he gravitated toward mathematics, in part because of a gifted teacher, Hans Hahn, who was one of the founding members of the "Vienna Circle"—a group of brilliant scientists and philosophers who had taken it upon themselves to rid science of "metaphysics." Gödel attended some of the meetings of the Circle but apparently said very little, probably because he vehemently disagreed with its positivistic approach. Gödel was then, and remained, a Platonist in mathematics: mathematical entities, he thought, have a reality which we do nót create but rather discover. I suspect he was not disappointed when his theorems showed there was more to mathematics than what could be generated by logical deduction from axioms.

In 1910, Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead had published a monumental treatise, *Principia Mathematica*. The title was not accidental: it echoed in part the title Newton gave to *his* treatise—the one that laid the foundations of the science of mechanics for the next two-and-a-half centuries. What Russell and Whitehead thought they had done was, similarly, to lay out a set of axioms and principles from which every true statement in mathematics could be derived; but the program of their *Principia* lasted only about twenty years. In those years, mathematicians like David Hilbert asked whether one could show that the axioms were actually consistent as well as "complete"—in other words, that every true proposition necessarily had a formal proof. Hilbert himself (to say nothing of Russell and Whitehead) thought the answer was yes.[3]

It is not clear what exactly inspired Gödel to study the completeness question. There were hints that Hilbert might be wrong, but it took Gödel to demonstrate it, as he did in his Ph.D. thesis. He was in his mid-twenties, about the same age as Einstein when he showed that Newton's *Principia* was wrong.

Neither then nor later did Gödel feel that he had exposed some kind of inherent limitation of the human mind. What he showed, rather, was that mathematics was not a logic machine. Some years later, the

[1] *Logical Dilemmas: The Life and Work of Kurt Gödel*. A.K. Peters, 361 pp., $49.95.

[2] Fragmentary conversations with Gödel by the late mathematical logician Hao Wang have just been published under the title *A Logical Journey* (MIT Press, 391 pp., $40.00), but these hardly count as a biography.

[3] This whole subject is nicely reviewed in Dawson's book, though the nonspecialist who finds it hard-going might profitably consult Douglas Hofstadter's 1980 volume, *Gödel, Escher, and Bach*, a less scholarly but somewhat more "user-friendly" approach to the issues.

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British mathematical logician Alan Turing reframed Gödel's results by translating them into the language of such a machine—namely, an abstract computer whose properties Turing himself defined. This was not a real machine of tubes and wires, but in principle it could perform any computation a real machine could perform. Turing found that in using his "machine" to explore an arithmetic net of inferences, there were necessarily some propositions for which the computing procedure might never terminate. For these propositions, the machine would go on grinding forever without letting the user know if they were ultimately true or false. This became known as the "halting problem."[4]

Not long afterward, Gödel showed that among the undecidable propositions (as I noted earlier) was the consistency of the system itself. This finding, which was as much a surprise to him as it was to everyone else, introduced a completely new way of looking at mathematical systems.

On the face of it, to ask whether a system is inconsistent sounds as if we were standing outside the system and noting its properties. Gödel's genius was to encode such a question within the system itself. He devised a method of attaching numbers—"Gödel numbers"—to formulas and hence to the strings of formulas that comprise a logical deduction. Any proof that the system was consistent would then be represented by a single number. But Gödel's ingenious translation of formulas into numbers showed that this final number states its own nonexistence. Since it cannot exist, the consistency of the system cannot be proved.[5]

The reaction to these results was, at first, mixed. Hilbert was very disturbed, but he was also too good a mathematician not to come to realize that Gödel was right. John von Neumann, about Gödel's age and one of the quickest mathematicians who ever lived, had also been working on the consistency of mathematical systems when he learned that Gödel beat him to a proof of undecidability. Not long afterward, von Neumann emigrated to the United States; he became one of the first professors at the Institute for Advanced Study and, when it came time in the late 30's for Gödel himself to emigrate, instrumental in finding him a home there.

IN 1933, Gödel made his first visit to the Institute to deliver a series of lectures. Upon his return to Vienna in 1934, he underwent the first of his nervous breakdowns, a subject Dawson treats with sensitivity and compassion.

Right from the start, Gödel's psychological disorders were mixed up with physical ones. Before he entered the Pukersdorf Sanitorium near Vienna he suffered an inflammation of the jawbone, traceable, it seems, to a bad tooth. Gödel accused his dentist of infecting him, perhaps deliberately. For the rest of his life, he was sure that doctors of all kinds were conspiring against him, and as his real physical problems increased, his paranoia kept him from seeking adequate treatment.

In 1934 Gödel was seen by an eminent psychiatrist, Julius Wagner Jauregg, who concluded that his breakdown was a consequence of overwork and recommended a brief stay in a spa. Considering the mental prodigies Gödel had just accomplished, the diagnosis seemed plausible enough; but a year later, he was back in a sanatorium suffering from depression. Still, he managed to make a second trip to the United States, during which—and this, too, was characteristic—he was as brilliant and, at least as far as mathematics was concerned, as lucid as ever.

One of the things that surely saved him over the years was his relationship with the woman who eventually became his wife. Her name was Adele Thusnelda Porkert. She was six years older than Gödel, and when they met she was already married—unhappily. Although she professed to have once been a ballet dancer, at the time of their meeting she was employed as a dancer in a Viennese night club. What this meant in reality is unclear, but to Gödel's family she was little better than a prostitute, and his brother and his mother—his father had died in 1929—vehemently opposed his interest in Adele. By the mid-1930's, however, he and the now-divorced Adele were traveling together, and in 1938 they married.

In the wedding picture reproduced in Dawson's book, Adele is blonde and rather pretty-looking, while Gödel appears almost sleek—dark horn-rimmed glasses and all. But when, two years later, the economist Oskar Morgenstern met Adele in Princeton, he would confide to his diary that she was a "Viennese washerwoman type: garrulous, uncultured, strong-willed." Be that as it may, she seems to have been able to deal with Gödel's paranoia, tasting his food to reassure him it had not been poisoned and listening patiently to his complaints about how the refrigerator was emitting poison gas.

On March 12, 1938, German troops entered Austria and were greeted with joy and open arms by the population. It is difficult to assess the nature of Gödel's reaction. Insofar as he said anything, it was oddly detached, but whether this reflected his true feelings or was a

[4] On account of such phenomena, some commentators see a relation between Gödel's incompleteness theorems in mathematics and Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principles in quantum mechanics. This, however, is not only befuddled but deeply ironic, since Gödel, like Einstein, did not believe in quantum mechanics.

[5] The Gödel number that states its own nonexistence is an extremely sophisticated example of the self-referential paradox, of a sort that has been known since the ancient Greeks. Perhaps the most famous involves the Cretan carrying a sign, "All Cretans are liars." Is this Cretan a liar?

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form of self-protection cannot be easily judged.

The Nazis running the Austrian educational system were themselves uncertain as to how to deal with Gödel. Against him was the fact that his thesis had been supervised by a Jew—Hans Hahn. On the other hand, he seemed completely apolitical. The authorities never quite trusted him. In the meantime, von Neumann and others were trying to secure a non-quota visa to the United States, without which the German authorities would not allow him to leave Austria.

During this period, Gödel was beaten up on the street by Nazi thugs who took him for a Jew, and it became imperative for him to leave. Finally, in January 1940, the Gödels were able to emigrate, taking the trans-Siberian railroad from Berlin and then a ship from Yokahama to San Francisco, where they arrived in March.

IT IS a curious fact about Gödel's relation to the Institute that, despite his being one of the greatest mathematicians of this century, he was not given a permanent professorship until 1953. Nor did Princeton University confer an honorary doctorate on him until 1975, well after he had received all sorts of other honors elsewhere and was anyway beyond the point of caring; he did not even bother attending the award ceremony. What lay behind this shabby treatment may simply have been academic politics of the usual, viperish kind. In any event, a more interesting facet of Gödel's stay at Princeton was his relationship with Albert Einstein.

It is hard to imagine two people less alike. Whatever revisionist notions have been advanced in recent years about Einstein's character, no one has accused him of paranoia. There radiated from him a supreme sense of self-confidence and serenity. Physically, too, he and Gödel were totally dissimilar. Einstein impressed many people as a very powerful man: C.P. Snow, who visited him in the late 1930's, thought he resembled a retired rugby player. Gödel, by contrast, looked as if he would blow away in a strong wind. Finally, Einstein never had much interest in pure mathematics, and even less in academic philosophy. For him these were simply useful tools for unlocking the secrets of the "Old One"—his playful reference to God.

Nonetheless, the two men became very close. Einstein, along with Morgenstern, and to a lesser extent von Neumann, took it upon himself to look after Gödel. Among other things, Dawson suggests that Einstein may have been attracted by Gödel's ability to adopt some apparently outrageous position and defend it by means of intricate logical argument. It is also possible that in some sense Einstein enjoyed Gödel's "craziness."

Two anecdotes suggest as much. Both are in Dawson's book, though I myself heard the first one from the horse's mouth—in this case, Ernst Straus, Einstein's last mathematical assistant. At the Einstein Centennial meeting in Princeton in 1979, Straus recalled how, just after the presidential election of 1952, Einstein burst into his office to announce that Gödel had now gone *completely* mad: he had voted for Eisenhower!

What Straus did not describe—and this is the second anecdote—were the circumstances that made it possible for Gödel to vote at all. In December 1947, Gödel went for his citizenship hearings in Trenton, New Jersey. He was accompanied by Einstein and Morgenstern. But there was a problem: Gödel had detected a logical flaw in the American Constitution, and was quite capable—so his friends feared—of refusing to swear allegiance to a country so deficient. On the way, Einstein tried to distract Gödel by telling all sorts of stories, but it was like trying to stop a train with a Q-Tip. Fortunately, the presiding judge in Trenton was the same man who had sworn Einstein in as a citizen a few years earlier, and the minute Gödel began his disquisition he made it clear he was not interested in the famous mathematician's logical dilemma. In fact, Gödel later described this judge as an "especially sympathetic person."

Aside from all this, Einstein was impressed that Gödel had made a significant discovery in the theory of relativity—something the textbooks now refer to as the "Gödel universe." Gödel claimed that he was led to his discovery by reading Immanuel Kant on the nature of time. Whatever the source, he hit upon a new solution to Einstein's cosmological equations, according to which the whole universe rotates and it is possible, therefore, to travel backward in time. Whether this universe of Gödel's has any connection with our own is another question.

A final anecdote, in connection with this discovery: a few years ago, the Princeton physicist John Wheeler told me that in the 1970's he and two junior colleagues decided to pay a little visit to Gödel. Although it was a nice spring day, they found him in his office wearing an overcoat and with the heater on. Gödel wanted to know if in the course of their work they had found any evidence for the rotation of the galaxies, and was disappointed to learn they had not even considered the possibility. It turns out that Gödel was trying to find his own evidence by consulting a standard source—probably *The Hubble Atlas of Galaxies*—and measuring angles with an ordinary ruler. Just to complete the story, Wheeler also told me that years later he ran into a man at the Institute who was going through page after page of these hieroglyphs to figure out what they signified, in preparation for a biography of Gödel; it was Dawson, of course.

Dawson ends his book wondering if anyone could make a drama out of Gödel's life as one was made

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from the life of Alan Turing. But Turing's life *was* a drama. He helped to crack the German Enigma code during World War II; he was a homosexual who was convicted under the Gross Indecency Act; and he later committed suicide by eating a poisoned apple. If there is drama in Gödel's life, it lies in the narrow path he threaded between genius and insanity. Suffering greatly, he left an intellectual legacy—an entirely new way of looking at mathematical truth—to be pondered forever.

God and Carl Sagan in Hollywood

Daniel J. Silver

IT IS a truth universally acknowledged that Americans are an incorrigibly religious people: the overwhelming majority say they believe in God, and most attend houses of worship with some regularity. With the growing shift toward a more conservative social philosophy in the country at large, an appreciation for religion has even begun to invade the consciousness of elite journalists and editors. But in the world of network TV and the movies (as, for that matter, in the world of contemporary American fiction), one would be hard-pressed to find much more than a hint of the significant part played by religion in American lives.

As far as the movies are concerned, this is not an entirely new phenomenon. True, in the 1940's and 50's a sort of sub-genre flourished that did pay respect to inspirational sentiments: the genre included such now-classics as *The Bells of St. Mary's*, *Miracle on 34th Street*, *Going My Way*, and, the strongest of them all, *It's a Wonderful Life*. Nor should one forget biblical epics like *The Ten Commandments* and their close cousins, the sword-and-sandal spectacles with Christian themes like *Barabbas* and *El Cid*. But none of these movies, loaded down as they were with Hollywood bombast and/or Hollywood treacle, had much to do with real piety or a sense of spiritual mission. For that, one would have to turn to a handful of foreign films including Roberto Rossellini's *The Flowers of St. Francis* (1950), Ingmar Bergman's *Winter Light* (1963), the Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky's exquisite *Andrei Rublev* (1966), and, more problematically, Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964).

So it is interesting that Hollywood has finally given us a movie, *Contact*, which appears to take the religious perspective seriously. It is no small movie, either, but a big-budget special-effects spectacular whose theme is the possibility of discovering "advanced civilizations" on other planets. In exploring that theme, *Contact* purports to stage a head-on confrontation over one of the big issues of our time: the conflict between secularism and religion.

Contact is based on a 1985 novel of the same name by the late Carl Sagan, the famous astronomer and gifted popularizer of science. It stars the Oscar-winning Jodie Foster; features the hot new celebrity, Matthew McConaughey; and is di-

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rected by Robert Zemeckis, of *Forrest Gump* fame. Though in box-office terms *Contact* has not matched the success of the cartoonish *Men in Black*—which is also about intergalactic aliens—it has done well enough, with one of the highest per-screen average grosses of this summer's movies. And if the critical reception has been mixed, those critics who have praised the film have placed special emphasis on the seriousness of its themes.

Would that they were right.

CARL SAGAN is best-known for his teachings about the wonders of space exploration, both in books and in a public-television series, *Cosmos*, which has reportedly been seen by hundreds of millions of viewers worldwide. Less well-known are his ideological side—during the late stages of the cold war, he was a zealous advocate of (American) nuclear disarmament—and his philosophical views. A lifelong skeptic, rationalist, and agnostic, Sagan wrote frequently about what he saw as the inevitable displacement of religious belief by scientific truth.

Religion, for Sagan (here taking a tacit cue from Freud, among others), was a myth-system created to deal with human uncertainty. But in the early modern era, as scientific methods gained ascendancy, the forces of orthodoxy became increasingly exposed as outmoded bastions of superstition, struggling to hold on to their power by suppressing or distorting the truth about reality. Sagan conceded that religion did give people a kind of hope; but it was a hope based on illusion. In his view, scientific optimism offered a more than adequate replacement for religious hope, just as the sense of wonder inherent in scientific discovery offered a more than adequate replacement for religious awe.

Finally, Sagan was a tireless advocate of searching the heavens for signs of intelligent extraterrestrial life. Applying evolutionary theory to the cosmos as a whole, he reasoned that somewhere in the vast number of potentially life-sustaining planets, natural selection must have found a way to coax other collections of organic molecules into life. Since this would have happened long before the relatively recent birth of our own life forms, there was a distinct possibility that "technical civilizations," developed beyond our own capacities, existed "out there" in the cosmos.

The discovery of such alien intelligence would, Sagan was convinced, offer ultimate vindication of the Darwinian challenge not only to the creationist "myth" but to the entire structure of Jewish and Christian teleology. Once human beings were shown to be neither unique nor all that special, the vanity that propped up religious faith—for Sagan, a kind of covert narcissism by which humans projected their own imagined centrality onto an ersatz "supreme being"—would be discredited once and for all. Man, having been demoted, would be able to see clearly at last.

AND SO we come to *Contact*, both the novel and the movie. Dr. Ellie Arroway (Jodie Foster) is an astronomer who spends countless hours at her radio telescopes—large, radar-like antennae that focus on regions of space—listening to cosmic static and hoping to discern an intelligible signal. Fighting off both scientific skeptics and the demands of political expediency, Ellie struggles to keep her mission going. And one day, out of the blue, she is rewarded: instead of random noise, she hears a signal of seeming regularity. As astronomers around the world confirm, the signal is of unknown, extraterrestrial origin.

Once decoded, the signal turns out to contain an elaborate set of instructions for a machine to transport an earthling to the vicinity of the star Vega, 26 light years away. At a cost of hundreds of billions, the machine is indeed built, and after several reversals Ellie is chosen to make the journey. Propelled through the universe via tunnels in space-time, she arrives at last on a lovely beach where she encounters an alien being in the simulated form of her own long-dead father. He informs her that he is part of a cosmic network of similar beings but refuses to enlighten her further, insisting that "small steps" are necessary for mankind.

Ellie then returns to earth, where to her dismay everyone is convinced that the machine malfunctioned, and that in fact she has not gone anywhere. Her alleged experiences on the alien planet chalked up to hallucination or lies, Ellie is subjected to humiliating public and private interrogation. In the end, neither vindicated nor disproved, she is left with her own convictions and a number of faithful followers.

Contact, the movie, features several spectacular sequences, including an opening shot that moves gradually from deep space through various star systems and gaseous nebulae to Earth as, on the soundtrack, a babble of radio transmissions suggests how we humans might have made our presence known to alien beings. The sequence depicting Ellie's "flight" to Vega is another impressive light show, the most elaborate of its kind since *2001* (a movie whose metaphysical aspirations most closely match this one).

The movie's human spectacle, however, is not so impressive. Jodie Foster can always be counted upon to evoke her special amalgam of fierce independence and vulnerability; in this sense, her performance here reprises her role as the government investigator in *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991). But in *Contact* she errs consistently on the side of independence, with the result that she seems always to be performing *at* the other actors rather than with them. We are clearly meant to identify with the character she plays; but her self-righteousness—an unwit-

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ting reflection of Sagan's own personality—is a turn-off.

Not, admittedly, for Palmer Joss (Matthew McConaughey), the movie's representative religious figure: a lapsed seminarian with golden locks and a winning smile, he has a very brief affair with Ellie and then keeps reappearing in her life at unexpected moments. A number of reviewers have complained that the alleged chemistry between these characters seems fake on screen, and so it does. In part, this is no doubt due to the incoherence of the roles they are asked to play. Palmer is there to slow Ellie down with religious tribulations, but (despite the movie's leisurely pace) Zemeckis is in such a hurry to get Ellie packing off to Vega that no real exchange of views takes place between them.

Still, that may be just as well. Critics who like the film have tended to say (as do, piously, the film's principals in their publicity materials) that it is even-handed in its presentation of science and religion. But this is nonsense. We first see Ellie, for example, as a young girl living with her widowered father. When he collapses of a heart condition, she fails to retrieve his medicine in time to prevent his death. A well-meaning priest tries to console her by affirming that what happened was God's will. No, she retorts sharply, it was only poor judgment: if she had stored the pills in a more accessible place, her father would still be alive. The camera lingers on the priest's scandalized expression: alongside the life-saving potential of science, religion's solace, we are made to see, is a cheap and impotent thing.

Then there is Palmer Joss. We meet him shortly before Ellie sleeps with him; he is wearing a dirty T-shirt and exudes the phony charm of an egotist. Palmer, however, is on the way up. With his folksy manner, comfortingly bland theology, and the pseudo-intellectual authenticity provided by his divinity degree, he wins national prominence and improbably wheedles his way into a position as adviser to the President. In this capacity, he meets Ellie again when she comes to present her discovery to the White House.

Winning her trust, Palmer vows, despite his own religious doubts about the project, to back her effort to get to Vega; but then he betrays her before an international panel of experts looking for a representative earthling by asking if she believes in God. She can only reply, candidly, that "as a scientist" she lacks proof of divine existence, an answer that disqualifies her with her examiners. Thus is intellectual integrity itself turned into a stick with which unscrupulous religion beats down reason and scientific honesty alike.

What keeps Palmer sympathetic is not the sincerity of his religious convictions, for which no evidence is offered, but his apparent love for Ellie. Later on, to make up for his betrayal, he endorses her belief that she really did travel to an alien planet, thus surrendering his own theological convictions for her sake if not for the sake of truth. But lest this seem to sweeten the overall portrait of religious believers offered in *Contact*, the filmmakers go out of their way to contrive other unattractive images. Thus, Ellie's scientific mentor is killed in an act of terrorism committed by a Bible-thumping fundamentalist with a long blond mane and crazed stare; and her mission is anathematized by an oily Christian minister with political ambitions who bears the charming name of Richard Rank. This minister is described in the movie's press kit as "the right-wing leader of a conservative religious coalition," and somehow it comes as no surprise to learn that in preparing for the part, Rob Lowe, the actor who plays him, consciously modeled himself on the former Christian Coalition leader Ralph Reed.

With the various religious figures in *Contact* trashed for their dishonesty, hypocrisy, bad faith, and fanaticism, it is no wonder that religion itself should emerge in hopeless caricature, and that we glean no hint either of its sources of truth or of its power. Of course, science too does not exactly fare brilliantly in the hands of *Contact*'s makers, being reduced essentially to pulp and pop. But at least they know enough to know they need to be respectful. When it comes to religion, Hollywood still has a long way to go if it ever means to catch up with the rest of the country.

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MUSIC

Taking Sinatra Seriously

Terry Teachout

WHAT WILL Frank Sinatra be remembered for? In the decade prior to his retirement in 1995, his singing became a grotesque and embarrassing self-caricature. His oft-reported ties to organized crime have figured prominently in the tabloids for years. And then there are the various cults that have formed around him. His most passionate fans, obsessed with his charismatic manner, celebrate his best singing and his worst indiscriminately. Meanwhile, another cult, a cottage industry of scholars specializing in "cultural studies," neglects his art to focus on his status as an "iconic" figure in American popular culture; a conference to be held next year at Hofstra University on *Frank Sinatra: The Man, the Music, the Legend*, is typical of the breed.

From the sorts of papers that are likely to be delivered at such a conference, as from the state of Sinatra's reputation elsewhere, one would hardly suspect that he *really* deserves to be remembered as, in the words of the music critic John Rockwell, "the greatest singer in the history of American popular music." Among those whose professional judgment counts, moreover, Rockwell is hardly alone. In 1956, the jazz critic Leonard Feather polled 120 noted musicians, asking them to name their all-time favorite singer. Sinatra received 56 votes; the runner-up, Nat Cole, received 13. Some of the musicians who put Sinatra at the top of their lists were Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Stan Getz, Benny Goodman, Gerry Mulligan, Oscar Peterson, Lester Young—and Nat Cole.

What did these great jazz musicians admire about Sinatra? No doubt some were fascinated by his public personality; but in the end, a musician is significant only to the extent that he succeeds in expressing his personality through music. Sinatra's ability to do this, and not his tempestuous love life or (to quote the Hofstra conference's "call for papers") his "multigenerational presence," is what alone gives him a continuing claim on our attention.

BORN IN 1915 in Hoboken, New Jersey, Frank Sinatra made his first recordings in 1939.[1] Four short years later, he was one of the most famous men in America, hugely successful both as a singer and as a screen actor, adored by countless teenage girls and esteemed by his colleagues, all of whom unhesitatingly acknowledged his preeminence. "I know it sounds like something out of a B movie," recalled Jo Stafford, who sang with Sinatra from 1940 to 1942 in the big band of the trombonist Tommy Dorsey, "but it's true: before he'd sung four bars, we knew. We knew he was going to be a great star."

Sinatra's recordings with Dorsey may seem, on first hearing, not to justify his youthful celebrity. Such songs

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[1] No factually reliable full-length biography of Sinatra has yet been published. The best short treatment of his life and work is John Rockwell's *Sinatra: An American Classic* (1984); also of interest is Gene Lees's "The Sinatra Effect," an insightful essay reprinted in Lees's *Singers and the Song* (1987). The most useful books about Sinatra to appear in recent years are *The Frank Sinatra Reader* (Oxford, 297 pp., $27.50), a collection of essays edited by Steven Petkov and Leonard Mustazza, and Will Friedwald's *Sinatra! The Song Is You* (Scribner, 557 pp., $30.00), an uneven and overpersonal but nonetheless informative survey of Sinatra's singing career. Sinatra's recordings themselves are discussed in the discography at the end of this article.

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as "I'll Never Smile Again" reveal a light, lyric baritone voice and an exceptional command of legato: the individual notes in each phrase are bound together seamlessly, and shaped with perfect taste. ("He sings with such a *beautiful* legato!" the music critic Virgil Thomson once remarked admiringly.) But most big bands featured "boy singers" with attractive baritone voices, all of them, like Sinatra himself, influenced by Bing Crosby, the dominant popular singer of the 30's. If Sinatra's earliest recordings do not strike today's listeners as notably original in style, that is because we tend to forget that by 1942, he was already well on the way to replacing Crosby as the most frequently imitated male singer of the day.

Sinatra's youthful style, in other words, no longer sounds individual because it has long since become the *lingua franca* of popular singing. But in 1939, as the jazz singer Joe Williams has pointed out, no one was singing like Sinatra:

> I loved the way he sang, the way he phrased. I could understand the lyric. He had found an unusual sound quite unlike anybody I had heard before. . . . He listened to Tommy [Dorsey], and he tried to sing the way Tommy played: to assimilate the breathing technique so that everything [in the lyric] was tied together in a narrative, so that you could understand what was happening.

This last observation is crucial to understanding Sinatra's main contribution to the art of popular singing: he phrased with a conscious regard for the logic of the lyric. As he once told an interviewer:

> It's important to know the proper manner in which to breathe at given points in a song, because otherwise what you're saying becomes choppy. For instance, there's a phrase in the song "Fools Rush In" that says, "Fools rush in where wise men never go/But wise men never fall in love/So how are they to know?" Now that should be one phrase because it tells the story right there. But you'll hear somebody say, "Fools rush in," and breathe, "Where wise men never go"—breath—"But wise men never fall in love. . . ." But if you do it [in one breath], that's the point, you've told the whole story.

That this approach was not merely a technical innovation but a key feature of Sinatra's interpretative approach becomes more obviously apparent in the solo recordings he began making for Columbia in 1943, most of them featuring the romantic orchestral arrangements of Axel Stordahl. Unlike Bing Crosby, whose informal singing style was notable for its relaxed, jazz-inflected air and its comparatively narrow expressive range, Sinatra recorded mostly ballads, often sung at very slow tempos and usually accompanied by medium-sized string sections. In these ballads, moreover, he "read" the lyrics with uncanny clarity and emotional directness. His phrasing communicated that directness, and made him stand out as among the first popular singers to take seriously the sentiments embodied in the songs he sang.

Sinatra's word-conscious approach was ideally suited to the songs of the 30's and 40's. Ira Gershwin, Lorenz Hart, Johnny Mercer, and Cole Porter, all of whom had been deeply influenced by the light verse of 19th-century craftsmen like W. S. Gilbert, brought to the art of popular songwriting an unprecedented degree of sophistication, and Sinatra was early to grasp the significance of their achievement. "I'll leave the music to somebody else," he once said. "I pick the lyrics."

To be sure, the young Sinatra had not yet learned how to illuminate fully the subtleties of the more emotionally complex lyrics of the period; his early recordings of such Johnny Mercer lyrics as "Laura" and "One for My Baby" are painfully naive by comparison with the versions he re-recorded in the 50's. Moreover, his voice, though already lovely, was still immature, and his sense of swing would remain undeveloped for another decade or so, causing him to sound awkward and uncomfortable in uptempo numbers.[2] He was at his best in simple, straightforward ballads like Hoagy Carmichael's "The Nearness of You," recorded in 1947; his unaffected sincerity and sustained legato line in this song still move listeners a half-century later.

THE COURSE of Sinatra's career took a sharp downward turn as he entered his mid-thirties. He was no longer young enough to be considered a "boy singer," or to be dramatically credible in juvenile roles like the ones he had played successfully in the movies *Anchors Aweigh* (1945) and *On the Town* (1949). In 1950, he suffered a vocal crisis, possibly brought on by the stresses of his complicated private life. (Sinatra divorced his first wife the following year in order to marry the actress Ava Gardner, who left him shortly thereafter.) By 1952, he had been dropped by both Columbia and MGM, and was out of work and in debt.

Characteristically, Sinatra's response was to reinvent himself. Putting his juvenile persona behind him once and for all, he accepted a supporting role in the 1953 film of James Jones's war novel, *From Here to Eternity*, for which he won an Oscar.[3] He

[2] Though such later albums as *Songs for Swingin' Lovers* show how Sinatra developed into a self-assured and impressively accomplished "rhythm singer," he was never a jazz singer in the true sense of the term. "The difference between Frank and me," Nat Cole once remarked acutely, "is that the band swings Frank, and I swing the band."

[3] Though Sinatra's acting career is beyond the scope of this essay, it should be noted that while most of the movies he made in the 50's and 60's were second-rate or worse, his performances in such films as *From Here to Eternity*, *The Man With the Golden Arm* (1955), and *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) were widely admired by critics and colleagues. Shirley MacLaine spoke for many when she described Sinatra as "about as naturally talented as anybody I've ever known in my life," though she also deplored his unwillingness to "work harder at what he's doing."

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then signed a contract with Capitol Records, hired Nelson Riddle as his chief arranger, and developed a new singing style whose appeal to 50's audiences was as powerful as his youthful crooning had been in the 40's.

The new Sinatra was a mature Sinatra. Not only had his voice grown darker and more characterful, but he also had a larger fund of emotional experience on which to draw, and his artistry deepened as a result. Though his taste in songs had always been good, he now concentrated primarily on first-rate standards; though he had long been musically painstaking, he now took still greater care in crafting his interpretations. Nelson Riddle, perhaps the finest arranger ever to work in the field of popular song, fashioned uniquely challenging musical settings for him, and in response, Sinatra created a fully adult alter ego to sing the "saloon songs" he loved. This persona—almost certainly based in part on the character Humphrey Bogart played in *The Maltese Falcon* and *Casablanca*—was a man who had been unlucky in love, and who was recounting his sufferings candidly and unsentimentally.

Sinatra's musical growth is thrown into high relief by comparing his two recordings of the Jule Styne-Sammy Cahn torch song, "Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry." The first, made for Columbia in 1946, is a tasteful performance which does little more than skim the surface of the song. The second, made for Capitol in 1958, is pensive and subdued yet intensely dramatic, rising to an expansive climax in which Sinatra sings an open-throated, beautifully placed high E-flat. Riddle's orchestral accompaniment, reminiscent of Maurice Ravel in its deployment of instrumental color (and conducted with remarkable rhythmic flexibility by Felix Slatkin, first violinist of the Hollywood String Quartet), adds immeasurably to the total effect of Sinatra's singing, which is overwhelming in its impact.

The Capitol recording of "Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry" also illustrates another feature of Sinatra's mature style: the underlining of individual words and phrases for dramatic emphasis. In 1946, Sinatra "read" Sammy Cahn's lyric in a smooth, evenly produced manner; in 1958, the vocal production is no less even (indeed, the climactic phrase is actually longer), but the buttery smoothness has given way to a detailed lyricism in which dynamics and tone color change subtly from phrase to phrase in response to the unfolding of the "story."

This recording is part of Sinatra's greatest album, *Only the Lonely*, a collection of twelve ballads which represents the high-water mark of postwar popular singing. Especially in "Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry," "It's a Lonesome Old Town," "Spring Is Here," and "One for My Baby," Sinatra attains a degree of vocal refinement and interpretative subtlety worthy of comparison—yes, I will say it—with a classical recitalist like the German baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Each song is turned into a one-man, one-act dramatic monologue in which the music *carries* the words, precisely in the manner of Fischer-Dieskau's performances of such art songs as Franz Schubert's *Erlkönig* or Hugo Wolf's *Anakreons Grab*. Yet vocal beauty is never subordinated to the demands of dramatic logic: Sinatra's legato remains pristine throughout.

WHILE THERE are other, equally valid ways to sing popular songs—including the lighter, more dispassionate style of singers like Crosby, Fred Astaire, and Ella Fitzgerald—Frank Sinatra's mature style proved so compelling that it left its stamp on nearly every well-known male pop singer of the 50's. Only those singers who (like Mel Tormé) were deeply influenced by jazz, or whose voice types bore no resemblance to Sinatra's dark, viola-like baritone (as was the case with Tony Bennett), were able to escape his influence.

But Sinatra's style also contained the seeds of its own eventual decadence. At its best, his highly dramatic singing was carefully balanced between restraint and exhibitionism—a balance he seems to have found it difficult to strike outside the tightly controlled environment of the recording studio. In concert, both in the singing itself and in his on-stage patter, he tended to lapse into a crowd-pleasing vulgarity astonishing in so sensitive a musician. "He sings with the grace of a poet," the trombonist Milt Bernhart once said, "but when he's talking to you, it's New Jersey." Only in the studio was he completely and consistently himself.

That self became harder to locate as rock-and-roll transformed American popular music beyond recognition. Starting in the mid-60's, Sinatra attempted with limited success to reinvent himself yet again for a new generation of listeners, working with such rock-oriented musicians as Jimmy Bowen (who would become famous a quarter-century later for his work with Garth Brooks and other country singers). Though he also continued to look for new material compatible with his essential musical seriousness—he was among the first American popular singers, for example, to perform the work of the Brazilian composer Antonio Carlos Jobim—many of Sinatra's recordings of the 60's revealed a growing loss of artistic direction, and in 1971 he announced his retirement.

When he resumed performing in 1974, he deemphasized recording in favor of public appearances, having learned that he could still fill large auditoriums with his aging but loyal fans. But like those fans, Sinatra too was growing older, and no sooner had he begun to perform in public again than it became clear that his voice was in decline—a natural development for a man of nearly sixty, but one he was apparently incapable of accepting. The decline was slow at first, but by the time he finally retired for good, a few months before his eightieth birthday, his worst per-

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formances had done his musical reputation a good deal of harm.

FORTUNATELY, THIS final phase of Sinatra's career has begun at last to recede from view, and it has also become easier with the passage of time to ignore the gargoyle-like Mafioso *manqué* of tabloid myth in favor of the master musician who (in Mel Tormé's admiring words) "held the patent, the original blueprint on singing the popular song."

Not that it will ever be possible, or even necessarily desirable, to ignore completely the tawdry side of Frank Sinatra: his vulgarity is part of his mystery. But it is only in the pure light of his singing that the unsavory aspects of his long and eventful life remain visible. No other singer has done more to widen the expressive horizons of American popular song, and none has been more widely admired or influential. It is the consummate artistry of the man who recorded such classic albums as *Only the Lonely* and *In the Wee Small Hours* that will be remembered long after everything else about him is forgotten, or has become grist for the mills of gushy journalists and clueless professors.

A Select Discography

FEW SINGERS, whether popular or classical, have recorded so extensively over so long a period of time as Sinatra, who cut his first 78 in 1939 and taped his last CD in 1994. He is thought to have made some 1,800 recordings, including multiple versions of many songs (eight different performances of Cole Porter's "Night and Day" have been commercially released to date). Virtually all of his studio recordings are now available on compact disc. Here are some of the best:

1939-42: Sinatra's earliest commercial recordings were made with the big bands of Harry James and Tommy Dorsey. "All or Nothing at All," performed with James in 1939, is part of *Portrait of Sinatra: Columbia Classics* (see below). *Frank Sinatra & Tommy Dorsey: Greatest Hits* (RCA Victor 09026-68487-2) is a budget-priced compilation of fifteen of the most popular Sinatra-Dorsey sides, including "I'll Never Smile Again."

1943-52: *The Columbia Years, 1943-1952: The Complete Recordings* (Columbia/Legacy CXK 46873, 12 CD's) includes all 285 songs Sinatra did for Columbia (including numerous unissued sides), heard in exceptionally clear-sounding digital transfers from the original 78's and master tapes. Dozens of albums drawn from this body of work have been released by Columbia over the years, of which the most recent and representative is *Portrait of Sinatra: Columbia Classics* (Columbia/Legacy C2K 65244, two CD's), a 36-track anthology in which such performances as "The Nearness of You" and the first version of "Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry" can be heard in the same excellent transfers originally made for *The Columbia Years*.

1953-59: Sinatra was at his vocal and artistic peak in the studio albums he made for Capitol during the 1950's, the best of which are *In the Wee Small Hours* (Capitol CDP 7 46571-2), *Close to You* (CDP 7 46572-2), *Songs for Swingin' Lovers!* (CDP 7 46570-2), and *Only the Lonely* (CDP 7 84471-2, including the second versions of "Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out to Dry" and "One for My Baby"), all arranged by Nelson Riddle; *Come Dance With Me* (CDP 7 48468-2), arranged by Billy May; and *Where Are You?* (CDP 7 91209-2, including the second version of "Laura"), arranged by Gordon Jenkins. These six CD's form the core of Sinatra's recorded legacy.

1960-71: Starting in 1960, Sinatra began recording for Reprise, his own label. These albums were generally less interesting than the ones he made for Capitol, in part because Sinatra's choice of material grew increasingly erratic. But he can be heard at the top of his form on *Sinatra & Strings* (Reprise 9 27020-2), arranged by Don Costa; *Sinatra and Swingin' Brass* (9 27021-2) and *Sinatra-Basie* (1008-2), both arranged by Neal Hefti, the latter featuring the big band of Count Basie; and *Francis Albert Sinatra & Antonio Carlos Jobim* (1021-2), arranged by Claus Ogerman. Also of interest is *The Reprise Collection* (9 26340-2, four CD's), an 81-track anthology which contains a cross-section of Sinatra's best work for Reprise, including a number of outstanding performances otherwise available only on inferior albums.

1973-84: When Sinatra resumed performing and recording in 1973, his voice was already starting to show signs of technical decline, and none of his post-retirement albums is of consistently high quality. (Several of the better performances from this period are included on *The Reprise Collection*, above.) Sinatra made no commercial recordings between 1986 and 1993, when he was unwisely persuaded by Capitol to return to the studio for *Duets* (Capitol CDP 89611-2), an album which, though a great popular success, is of no musical interest whatsoever and reveals his voice to be in an advanced state of decrepitude.

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Books in Review

Color Bind

Race, Crime, and the Law
by Randall Kennedy
Pantheon. 539 pp. $30.00

Reviewed by
James Q. Wilson

FOUR DECADES ago, the civil-rights movement began in earnest. Over three decades ago, the first major civil-rights act was passed. During those heady times, anyone who wondered where our society ought to head was usually told that it was struggling to free itself of racial classifications. When, as a student, I asked a liberal professor what African-Americans wanted, I was told, simply, that they wanted to be treated like everyone else.

It was a compelling answer, and one that I believed. In those days, a racial liberal was one who believed in a color-blind Constitution. But without knowing it, we were wrong as we spoke.

When the Supreme Court outlawed school segregation in 1954, it did so on the grounds that separate schools were inherently unequal. But in justifying that claim, it looked not to legal principles but to the findings of social science. Racially separate schools were unequal, it asserted, not because it was wrong to tax everyone for education and then deny students equal access to what their parents had supported, but because separate schools might make black students *feel* unequal. Some years later, when a Southern school opened its doors to students of every race, the Court objected, saying that a freedom-of-choice plan was wrong if it did not achieve the "ultimate end," which was a "unitary, nonracial system of education." That is to say, desegregation was not enough; actual integration was essential. A few years later, the Court, now speaking through the words of a Chief Justice appointed by a Republican President, said that not only was freedom of choice insufficient, but if separation had been the result of actual past discrimination, then the Constitution might require redrawn district lines, the reassignment of teachers according to race, and court-ordered busing.

As businesses began to open their doors to black Americans, the same verdict was passed. The Duke Power Company, ruled the Court, could not require new employees to have a high-school diploma if that requirement affected black and white applicants differently. The company would have to show—somehow—that any such qualification was necessary to the performance of its tasks.

Again, when all college doors were opened to African-Americans, it was not enough that black and white applicants have an equal chance based on prior academic performance. It became necessary that a certain *fraction* of blacks be admitted, in order to achieve an undefined goal called "diversity." Though the *Bakke* case (1978) limited the outright use of quotas, it did nothing to slow this demand for diversity. When, this year, the California constitution was amended by referendum to bar the state from discriminating against, or granting preferential treatment to, any indi-

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vidual or group on the basis of race or ethnicity, those who supported the amendment were inexplicably denounced as racists. The long-standing idea that the Constitution is color-blind was not only refuted, it was stood on its head; to advocate color-blind law now marked one as a reactionary.

When, finally, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, part of the landmark civil-rights legislation of the mid-1960's, was amended in 1982, the new Section 2 gave African-Americans the right to demand the adoption of altered electoral districts in cities and counties, not because existing district lines reflected a discriminatory intent but because the absence of elected blacks was itself deemed to be racially discriminatory.

GIVEN THE move from race neutrality to race favoritism, and the emergence of racial preferences in law—a trend that has proceeded apace for 30 years now—one looks almost in vain for any assertion of the old principle of racial neutrality. I come, therefore, to the new book by Randall Kennedy, a professor at the Harvard Law School, with a certain enthusiasm. For in it Kennedy boldly puts forth a claim for race neutrality at least with respect to one part of the law: namely, criminal law.

In particular, Kennedy rejects the notion that high penalties for dealing crack cocaine, or laws requiring juvenile curfews, indisputably reveal a racist intent, or that getting tough on urban gangs hurts blacks more than it helps them. He has no patience with the African-Americans who rallied around a black gang that raped a white woman, or who defended Mayor Marion Barry of Washington, D.C., when he was arrested using cocaine, or who supported a black federal judge impeached by the Senate, or who devised a new legal theory to excuse blacks for beating a white man, Reginald Denny, nearly to death. On similar grounds, Kennedy disdains proposals that juries in criminal trials be racially mixed.

Kennedy does not hold these views because he thinks race does not matter in American society. On the contrary, it matters greatly. Human beings, with their limited capacity for extended sociability and their ingrained preference for groups like themselves, make distinctions on evidence far less obvious than race. Fifteen-year-olds will not play with thirteen-year-olds; men make jokes about women, and women return the compliment; every ethnic group ridicules its rivals (though today this is done privately); Yankee fans hate Red Sox fans and vice versa. All these things matter, and race matters even more.

But Kennedy has a different standard for the law, because it *is* the law. The central concepts of Anglo-Saxon criminal law rest squarely on the principle of legal equality, granting different criminal verdicts to persons only on the basis of their behavior and such narrowly defined considerations as accident, duress, self-defense, and premeditation. Who you are—rich or poor, black or white—should make no difference. It is out of this traditional understanding of the law that Kennedy writes: "I oppose racial discrimination by public officials in all but the narrowest of emergencies."*

Of course, how the law is applied often does make a difference, and so Kennedy devotes two chapters to reviewing how, historically, the law's practical applications have been distorted by anti-black prejudice, slavery, lynchings, and racially selective enforcement. His account helps us understand why so many African-Americans have come to distrust the way the law has been used. As a nation we have come far in correcting these problems, and we still have a way to go. But shifting applications of the law have not, in general, required altering the law itself. The statutes that allowed an Alabama jury in 1931 to convict the Scottsboro boys on charges of having raped two white girls, or a Mississippi jury in 1955 to acquit the men who lynched Emmett Till, did not have to be changed; what had to change was the conduct of the people who enforced those laws: police, judges, and juries.

Although racist assaults against defenseless blacks have not ended, they have been sharply reduced. To a degree, they have been replaced in importance by the no less racist claims of some African-American law-school professors who now endorse the practice of racially based "jury nullification." That means excusing African-Americans from some crimes simply because they are African-Americans. This kind of subversion of the law is no different in principle from what whites have historically done in excusing white attacks on blacks, or in failing to enforce the law when blacks have stolen "only" from other blacks. A principal advocate of the new view is Paul Butler of the George Washington University Law School, who has argued, in the prestigious *Yale Law Journal*, for making juries the expression of racial kinship, a position which discredits the notion that the law rests on the moral foundation of equal treatment of all. Butler's view is, in effect, that there should be no law. Kennedy subjects Butler to a savage attack.

In another area, Kennedy examines at length the controversy over racial discrepancies in the imposition of the death penalty. Here, although claims of across-the-board discrimination against blacks can easily be shown to be false, there is, he concludes, a particular, middle range of homicides—neither the least vicious, where the death penalty is rare, nor the most vicious, where the death penalty is common—in which the racial identity of the victim does make a difference, even after controlling for oth-

* In the page proofs of the book he puts the matter more strongly: "I reject race-dependent decision-making in all but the narrowest of circumstances."

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er factors. In this middle range, a death penalty is more likely to be imposed in the case of a white victim than in the case of a black victim. Kennedy relies on a study by David Baldus which may not be the last word on the subject and which in part was the result of the litigation strategy of the defense team in a murder trial; but it is a competent study, and could have led the courts to restrict the death penalty only to the most serious homicides. (It did not.) Kennedy's analysis of the Baldus study is done with great care.

The most difficult task Kennedy undertakes is to find ways of reducing the anger that honest blacks, especially black men, feel when they are the targets of heightened police scrutiny. We have all heard of decent African-Americans or Mexican-Americans being stopped and questioned as they move about engaged in innocent pursuits. But everyone also knows what the police know: African-Americans are much more likely than whites of the same age and sex to commit violent crimes. People are more worried about facing a young black male alone on a street corner than about facing a young white male. Jesse Jackson has confessed to such feelings himself. Of course, the chances of an average black male assaulting or robbing anyone are very small. But they are six times higher than in the case of an average white male. How should we—and more importantly, the police—act when we take these odds into account?

Kennedy struggles with this problem but not, I think, altogether successfully. He acknowledges that most appeals courts, hearing complaints that the police have used race or ethnicity as a marker for further investigation, have upheld the police. But at the same time, he reminds us, courts have subjected the use of racial classifications to "strict scrutiny"—that is, to the test that they are everywhere wrong unless narrowly tailored to serve a compelling government interest. Is there, then, a way to reduce the anger felt by innocent blacks or Mexican-Americans without hopelessly entangling the police in a policy that deprives them of the reasonable hunches their past experience has generated?

Kennedy's answer to this conundrum is to propose more intensive policing so that *everyone* will be stopped at the same rate, except in unusual cases where racial identity is part of a clear description of a criminal suspect. "Instead of placing a racial tax on blacks, . . . governments should, if necessary, increase taxes across the board." To do this, we will have to hire many more police officers, each of whom will be denied the right to use race as an indicator suggesting closer surveillance.

But this will not happen. Most of our big cities are already in desperate need of more officers. I have made this point on many occasions, citing the growing disproportion between citizen calls for help and the number of officers available to respond. In 1960, in Los Angeles, for example, there were three reports of violent crime for every police officer; by 1990 there were ten. It is true that a few more cops have been hired, but not nearly enough. To add yet a new goal—the pursuit of nonracial policing—to the many other reasons for beefing up the force will, I think, meet with a similar lack of response.

But suppose Los Angeles today had as many police, in proportion to the police workload, as it did in the 1940's, when the police had enough time to ticket you for jaywalking. Even if Los Angeles had 20,000 officers instead of its present total of fewer than 10,000, each individual officer would still be working in a remote area, detached from judicial supervision, facing tens of thousands of unknown citizens, having to identify people worth ques-

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tioning by relying, as ever, on cues: age, sex, location, attitude—and race and ethnicity. Statistically, each cue is about as reliable as the next. Kennedy cannot raise the tax on all of us high enough to make race meaningless in investigations any more than he can raise it high enough to make being a young male meaningless.

I HAVE no quarrel with Kennedy's urging that judges be ready to strike down police investigations in which race is used as a cue without any other supporting cues. I also admit that this, by itself, will not do much to improve the lot of innocent African-Americans, not only because the police may sometimes lie about why questioning has occurred but, more importantly, because once they have been released, innocent African-Americans who feel they have been harassed will ordinarily lack a legal opportunity to question the police conduct.

But the problem remains what it always was: when police were plentiful they were suspicious of young black males, and now that they are often scarce they are still suspicious. The answer to this problem is to bring down the rate at which young African-Americans commit crimes. Once black males commit murder at the same rate as white males, rather than at a rate six or more times higher, race will no longer be a useful cue and the police, with little judicial prompting, will cease depending on it.

And how does one reduce the youthful black crime rate? There is no well-understood program, though ideas for one abound. But the cause is not altogether hopeless. Arnold Barnett of MIT has already found a sharp decrease in the homicide rate among adult black males. And exceptionally difficult as the task may be, it is no more difficult than persuading the police—and pedestrians, and employers, and taxi drivers—to abandon the practice of estimating risk according to skin color. As long as we cannot make this argument convincingly, many law-abiding black men will continue to find themselves dodged by pedestrians, ignored by employers, and avoided by taxi drivers. They will suffer, and regrettably so. But the answer to their problem is not to be found within the confines of the law.

One last word: Randall Kennedy is an African-American. It should not be necessary to say this, but even in discussions of the law, race still seems to matter.

Declassified

We Now Know:
Rethinking
Cold War History
by John Lewis Gaddis
Oxford. 425 pp. $30.00

Man Without a Face:
The Autobiography
of Communism's
Greatest Spymaster
by Markus Wolf
with Anne McElvoy
Times Books. 367 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Gabriel Schoenfeld

BACK WHEN there was a USSR, Sovietologists would have traded tenure and their souls for a chance to eavesdrop on Communist titans privately chewing the fat. How differently things stand today, when musty archives have been opened, Communist officials have published candid memoirs, and the files of foreign ministries and intelligence agencies have been laid bare. If anything, we suffer now, more than a decade after the Soviet Union began to unravel, from a surfeit of revelations.

Here, for example, is an extract from a top-secret Russian transcript of a conversation between Anastas Mikoyan, a senior member of the Soviet politburo, and Fidel Castro, at the height of the missile crisis that in 1962 nearly incinerated the world:

> *Fidel Castro* informed us that he had very little rest and had spent the last few days on a trip to experimental farms in the provinces. He also informed us that one farm had discovered an interesting new variety of beans, or more precisely four different species of beans, which he was greatly interested in. Castro told Mikoyan that these beans, which grow like grapes, are perennials. The peasants who grow these beans say the plants stay alive for four or five years. He took some of the beans home with him, Castro went on, and saw for himself that they were easy to cook and tasted good.
>
> *Mikoyan* noted that this was the first time he had heard of perennial beans.
>
> *Castro* said that he too had never heard of perennial beans before.

Not everything kept hidden during the cold war was significant, then. The larger and more important truth, however, is that few genuinely significant things were kept secret for long. Two recent books, one by an American historian, the other by a Communist intelligence chief, illustrate these propositions.

JOHN LEWIS GADDIS, who has now taken up a history professorship at Yale, has gained a reputation through his many painstakingly researched books as the dean of American cold-war scholars. His latest work is a fresh trek across territory he has explored before. Surveying in close detail the key turning points of the Soviet-American

GABRIEL SCHOENFELD, *senior editor of* COMMENTARY, *was formerly the editor of* Post-Soviet Prospects, *published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.*

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conflict, from the division of the world at Yalta through the missile crisis in Cuba, Gaddis aims to bring our understanding into line with the masses of material that have lately come to light. What, precisely, have we learned? To judge by *We Now Know*, a great deal—and little or nothing at all.

Consider our "new" understanding of the outbreak of the Korean war. Ever since North Korean troops, in Soviet-manufactured tanks, came rolling over the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950, a circle of American revisionist historians has blamed the ensuing war on the United States. The North Korean assault, according to this line of argument, was in some way invited by dark forces within the U.S. government as a way to overcome President Truman's resistance to a proposed tripling of military expenditures. However unfounded, this version of events has been repeated and elaborated over the decades in ever more sophisticated forms. Mainstream American scholarship, too, having assimilated the revisionist interpretation and wrapped it in more subtle garb, has also failed, as Gaddis points out, to come to grips with the origins of the conflict. "Who started the Korean war?" asks Bruce Cumings, its leading historian, and answers, "No one and everyone."

But, as Gaddis notes, the documentary record now definitively answers the question of "who started the Korean war": Stalin, after much hesitation, gave an importuning Kim Il Sung a pledge of assistance and a green light to assault the South. The Soviet military then carried out detailed war planning and transported immense quantities of arms to North Korea. When the attack came, it was, as the American people believed at the time, a naked act of aggression that caught Washington and Seoul completely by surprise. In short, the idea that "no one and everyone" was responsible for the Korean war is sheer applesauce.

As with the Korean war, so with the cold war as a whole: the aggressor was the Soviet Union. Not only that, but the "origins, escalation, and ultimate outcome" of the conflict, Gaddis writes, flowed from the single most salient difference between the two sides: the American sphere of influence in Europe arose "largely by consent [of the participating countries], but . . . its Soviet counterpart could sustain itself only by coercion." This dissimilitude, in turn, eliminated the possibility of a European settlement agreeable to all the victorious powers. Nor, finally, can the Soviet Union's reliance on coercion and its efforts to browbeat the West into retreat be separated from the character of the man at its helm:

> It was Stalin's disposition to wage cold wars: he had done so in one form or another throughout his life, against members of his own family, against his own advisers and their families, against old revolutionary comrades, against foreign Communists, even against returning Red Army war veterans.

To ask whether a dictator with such a mental constitution really sought a cold war, Gaddis writes, is to ask whether a fish seeks water.

Gaddis's severe judgment of Stalin is fair enough. But, along with all the other findings in *We Now Know*, it raises a question—not about the cold war, but about the track record of this distinguished historian himself. In 1972, Gaddis's *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War* won the prestigious Bancroft prize. In that work, as in subsequent ones, Gaddis, though never at one with the revisionists, paid considerable deference to their "important" work. And even where he found reason to criticize their arguments, he tended in the end to split the dif-

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ference between them and the traditional understanding they were trying to knock down. Neither the USSR nor the U.S., he wrote back then, "bear[s] sole responsibility for the onset of the cold war." Rather, the conflict "grew out of a complicated interaction [in both countries] of external and internal developments." Moreover, "leaders of both superpowers sought peace."

Has it really required the prying open of vaults in the Kremlin to see what was wrong with such a tender assessment of the Soviet leader, let alone such an evenhanded assessment of blame? Gaddis, a scrupulous and probing historian, is to be commended for having the integrity to reverse gears and (implicitly) refute his own earlier work. Yet for all its merits as an updated account of the Soviet-American rivalry, *We Now Know* is rather disingenuously named. A more accurate title would be: *I Now Know What Most People Knew All Along*.

THE MEMOIRS of Markus Wolf, the general who for more than 30 years was in charge of the foreign intelligence branch of East Germany's ministry of state security—the so-called Stasi—offer a rather different kind of glimpse into what we have recently "learned" about the Communist world. The dust jacket of Wolf's book heralds it as "revealing" (not to mention "gripping," "honest," "remarkable," "fascinating," and "vivid"). But to ask the question again: what does it reveal?

Much of Wolf's memoir is devoted to recounting his efforts to place spies in high perches in Western governments. In this, he was very much a hands-on boss, supervising an army of clerks and operatives, and (uniquely among spy-agency chiefs) always running a dozen or so agents himself. For the most part, his espionage service did extraordinarily well—maneuvering hundreds of infiltrators into key positions everywhere that counted, including NATO headquarters, the West German Federal Intelligence Service (Bonn's version of the CIA), and, in the most celebrated case of all, the office of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt.

The story of these sensational spy cases as told by the other side does, of course, have its allure; but East Germany's achievements in the field of intelligence have hardly been a secret. Nor is the key to their success a mystery. Given their conspiratorial traditions, Communists have always enjoyed a natural edge in espionage; along with mass murder and the design of defective nuclear-power plants, spying is one of the few endeavors at which they have genuinely excelled.

The East Germans, moreover, enjoyed special advantages. Working in a country recently carved in two, they did not face barriers of language; they could exploit the twisted loyalties of a population defeated in war; and they could use the voluminous records of the Third Reich, which the Stasi had inherited from the Nazis, for blackmailing public servants in the West.

On this solid foundation, Markus Wolf built his networks, employing the usual tricks of the trade. "If I go down in espionage history," he writes, "it may well be for perfecting the use of sex in spying." This boast, and the semi-salacious details with which it is spelled out, have undoubtedly helped to market his memoir. But accounts of how lonely middle-aged secretaries were lured into "honey traps" and treason by "Romeo" agents hardly change one's view of the world.

Neither do Wolf's disclosures about Communist disinformation and "active measures." The fact that some leaders of the European "peace movement" had close ties to Moscow was never much of a secret (though those in the West who spoke publicly of the movement's links were routinely held up to ridicule for their pains). As Wolf confirms yet again, the KGB and its affiliates carefully cultivated Western peace activists and filled the coffers of their organizations with gold via channels of which even the recipients were sometimes unaware.

Wolf likewise confirms that the East Germans did not limit their covert activities to propaganda. In its effort to "color the globe our shade of red," the Stasi financed, trained, equipped, and furnished intelligence to despotic regimes and terrorist groups around the world. To provide just one example: shortly after the Israeli Olympic team was massacred in Munich in 1972, in an operation carried out by Palestinian terrorists, the East Germans decided to offer diplomatic privileges to Yasir Arafat's PLO and to provide its guerrilla fighters "routine training" in the use of explosives and guns.

ONE CANNOT say that Wolf's account of all this organized mayhem is without interest—it offers more than its share of enticing details. But as with Gaddis, the general picture is rather well known. What is less familiar, and what constitutes the only *genuine* revelation in the book, is its portrait of Wolf himself, the man who prides himself on having kept his photograph out of the Western press for three decades, the man without a face.

In light of the biography he unfolds, one can hardly fault Wolf for having become an ardent Communist. He spent the 30's and then the war years in the USSR as an adolescent refugee. His parents had fled from Hitler on two counts: his father was Jewish, and both mother and father were unswerving believers in the credo of Karl Marx. As victory over the Nazis drew close, Wolf was inducted into a Comintern school set up by Moscow to train future leaders of "liberated" Eastern Europe. There he was thoroughly instructed in the rigors and catechism of the Stalinist church: "They said, 'jump,' we said, 'how high?'"

At war's end, Wolf returned to a

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divided, conquered Germany as one of Moscow's stalwarts. He rapidly rose through the ranks, though, by his own telling, he did not remain blind to Communism's polyps and warts. At the beginning of his career, in the very "cellar of the residential house where I lived," Wolf tells us, "people were being interrogated and tortured by a police section known as K-5." And this was not, as Wolf came to see, an isolated event or an aberration. From the USSR's brutal behavior toward the defeated population—"like all Germans, we were horrified"—through the 1953 East German workers' uprising—"we were stunned by the violence and hatred"—through the bloody denouement of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and the crushing of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Wolf received ample lessons in the nature of the regime he served.

Touched as his conscience may have been by what he saw, however, and notwithstanding the fact that his "Jewish roots" gave him what he calls "a certain sensitivity . . . which others lacked," Wolf remained assiduously obedient and loyal. This he now explains on ideological grounds:

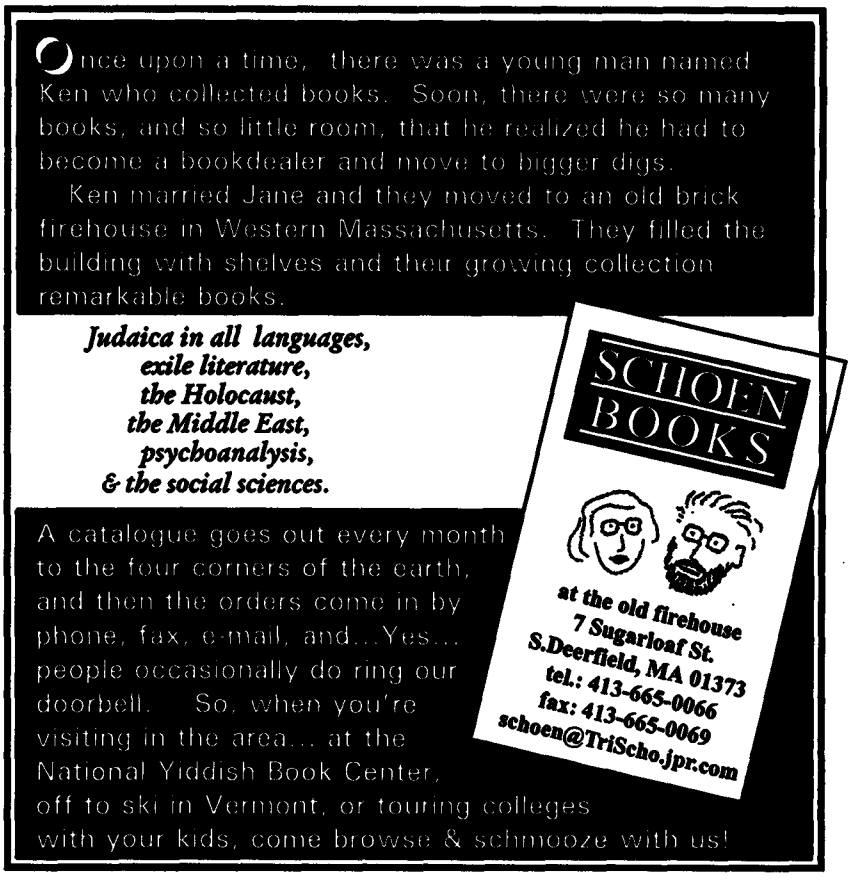
> I was incapable of seeing our socialist system as a tyranny. . . . There was perhaps a rough streak in its methods, but we always felt it was essentially a force for good.

STILL, AS he admits, ideology was not the whole story behind his devotion. There were the material benefits of membership in the Communist *nomenklatura*—"I was too weak to say no to these privileges." And there was also simple fear—not for his freedom or his life, but for his career. Only when the Berlin Wall was being knocked down in 1989, that is, when it was perfectly safe to do so, did Wolf summon the nerve to register any criticism of Communism in public, and then only as a voice in a chorus.

Even today, as many pages of this book testify, Wolf lacks the courage to own up to the wrongs done while he was at the summit of the Stasi. Accepting responsibility for the regime's "excesses" in one breath, in the next twenty he explains away his own culpability for deed after ruthless deed: "refusal would have been impossible"; "I was excluded from important operational details"; "my influence was limited"; "I opposed it"; "it was not under my control"; "I was not engaged in this, others were"; "I was never personally involved"; it "was not my responsibility"; "I did not give orders."

This medley of excuses—variations on a refrain heard at the Nuremberg trials after World War II—tells us a good deal about the inner traits of at least one specimen of Communist man. Scratch the daring spymaster and underneath you find a servile bureaucrat with an unshakable desire to be subsumed in the machinery of a powerful system and cause. To fill a void in his character, Wolf worked sedulously to ruin the lives of innocent people while aspiring, at every moment, to be nothing more than a flawless cog in the wheel. A "sense of unquestioning discipline," he writes with evident sincerity, "is the hardest thing for Western observers of our system to understand."

Wolf's book may not, like Gaddis's, be misnamed. But given the masked weakness that is the only secret truly worth knowing about its author (and how many others like him?), *Man Without a Face* might more aptly be titled *Man Without a Spine*.


Once upon a time, there was a young man named Ken who collected books. Soon, there were so many books, and so little room, that he realized he had to become a bookdealer and move to bigger digs.
Ken married Jane and they moved to an old brick firehouse in Western Massachusetts. They filled the building with shelves and their growing collection remarkable books.
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Caudillism and After

Mexico: Biography of Power
by Enrique Krauze
translated by Hank Heifetz
HarperCollins. 872 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Stephen Schwartz

ENRIQUE KRAUZE, who was born in 1947 in Mexico City, is an outstanding younger member of the circle around the Mexican poet Octavio Paz, winner of the 1990 Nobel prize in literature. This group is respected throughout the Hispanic world for the high intellectual standard on display in the monthly journal *Vuelta*, founded by Paz and for several years run by Krauze as its managing editor.

Krauze came to prominence in the early 1980's when he began to challenge the dogmas and rituals of left-wing Latin intellectuals, repudiating their fanatical hatred of the United States and their automatic obeisance to "progressive" totalitarianism around the globe and especially close to home. In 1984, both Paz and Krauze became the targets of an extraordinary campaign of vilification when they spoke out against the Marxist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. Paz was burned in effigy in the streets of Mexico City, and violent denunciations of him and his colleagues appeared daily on the front pages of Mexican and Nicaraguan papers. In the end, *Vuelta* acquired a new office with a solid steel door, guarded by an armed soldier.

The intensity of the campaign against the *Vuelta* group is a tribute, in a way, to the force and depth of its arguments. In Krauze's case, those qualities are now on full display for the English reader in *Mexico: Biography of Power*. Although a large volume, the book tells a remarkably condensed story which reflects years of serious study and meditation on the paradoxes of Mexico's history since its independence from Spain in the early part of the 19th century.

The book begins, appropriately enough, with two preliminary sections that paint the cultural-political background. In them, Krauze shows how the fundamentally centralist and authoritarian form of governance that is characteristic of modern-day Mexico has deep roots in the centuries first of Aztec and then, after the 16th century, Spanish imperial rule.

After gaining independence in 1821, Mexico was led by a long series of politico-military chieftains—*caudillos*—who rose and fell and rose and fell again, bringing little but ruin to their country. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, for one, held and lost power eleven times between 1833 and 1855; he is universally blamed for Mexico's defeat in its 1846-48 war with the United States and for the loss of half the country's territory—the portion that today constitutes the western U.S. from California to Texas. By the 20th century, the pattern exemplified by Santa Anna was well set, though the travails Mexico would soon undergo took rather different form.

The heart of Krauze's book is a set of biographical sketches of those who led the country in its period of radical turmoil. Francisco I. Madero, the first of the so-called "revolutionary *caudillos*," governed only from 1911 until 1913; his overthrow precipitated the acute stage of the Mexican Revolution, an extraordinarily cruel bloodletting that lasted a decade and took almost a million lives. The leading protagonists of this upheaval included the four *caudillos* who elaborated and became living embodiments of modern Mexico's populist-revolutionary myth: the Indian peasant Emiliano Zapata; the cowboy-bandit Doroteo Arango, better known by his *nom de guerre* Francisco "Pancho" Villa; and two leaders who sought only to strengthen their own personal rule, Venustiano Carranza and Álvaro Obregón. All four died violent deaths, not at all an accidental fact but a sanguinary sign of the times.

Obregón was succeeded in 1929 by Plutarco Elías Calles; an admirer of Hitler's methods if not of his ideology, Calles created the political system led by the Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI) that has dominated Mexico ever since. One of his principal accomplishments was to pick his own replacement—a mode of succession for which the PRI became notorious but, given what went before, also a mark of progress. Calles's intention was to use his protégé, Lázaro Cárdenas, as a foil for his own further exercise of power; he was instead sent into exile, and thus became the first of the 20th-century Mexican *caudillos* to enjoy the luxury, in 1945, of dying in bed.

KRAUZE'S "BIOGRAPHY of power" continues up to the present day, outlining the lives and the promises, broken and otherwise, of Mexico's remaining presidents. They include the incumbent, Ernesto Zedillo, a man (in Krauze's judgment) of "scrupulous personal honesty" who is now presiding over Mexico's transformation into a true multiparty democracy. But whether Zedillo will succeed is very much an open question. In addition to the travails special to Mexico, he faces the usual plagues that afflict overly centralized developing states: a bloated civil service, an unjust system of taxation, staggering inequality, corrupt police, and a democracy that up until this summer's remarkable elections was just veneer.

One of Krauze's fears is that a deterioration of conditions might lead the Mexican military, up to now wholly loyal to the institutions of government, to "claim [for itself] a justification and right to power."

STEPHEN SCHWARTZ, *a specialist in Latin American affairs, is on the staff of the* San Francisco Chronicle.

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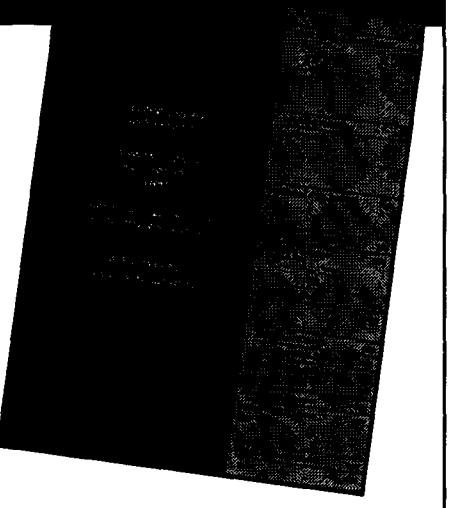

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But the sum of Krauze's worries is "the gravitational pull" of history itself on a country where power remains concentrated to a degree unseen elsewhere in the non-Communist world. For his incisive guide to that history Krauze deserves our esteem—though for his continued good health he would be wise not to relinquish an office with a solid steel door.

Negative Capability

Isaac Bashevis Singer:
A Life
by Janet Hadda
Oxford. 243 pp. $27.50

Reviewed by
Edward Alexander

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER was born in Poland in 1904 into a world of Jewish religious and cultural orthodoxy which no longer exists in Europe and of which there are only traces left in Israel and the United States. Despite his father's conviction that secular writers were leading the Jews into heresy, Singer, like his older brother Israel Joshua, opted to pursue a literary career. Troubled though he was by the doubtful future of the Yiddish language, resentful of the tradition that a Yiddish writer must be not merely an artist but a spokesman for his people, and distressed by his brother's public assertion that to write in Yiddish was to debase oneself as an artist, Singer was undeterred from his vocation.

He quickly established himself as a distinctive presence among the Yiddish writers of Warsaw, not only for his single-minded dedication to his craft but for his conviction that literary truth was to be found not in philosophy, psychology, sociology, or any of the other tools of modernity, but rather in folklore, dreams, and fantasies. His first story, "In Old Age," appeared in 1925. His first novel, *Satan in Goray*, was published a decade later; the tale of a deranged would-be messiah in 17th-century Poland, it is the perfect emblem of Singer's indifference to the literary and political fashions of the time.

In 1935, Singer bade farewell to his mistress, their five-year-old child, and his mother and younger brother, and left the "hell" that was Poland to join his older brother in New York. For the first time, he had to contend with the formidable problems of a Yiddish writer cut off from his native resources. Though he found employment as a writer and a journalist with *Der Forverts* (the *Forward*), the largest Yiddish-language daily in America, his creative work languished. On English-speaking soil he found his characters dead, his language silent, and, with the coming of World War II and the annihilation of Jewish Poland, the artistic foundations of his work destroyed; henceforth he could draw only from memories. As he was to recall later, he came close to being struck dumb:

> In Poland, Yiddish was still very much alive when I left. When I came here it seemed to me that Yiddish was finished. . . . The result was that for five or six or maybe seven years I couldn't write a word. . . . [W]riting became so difficult a chore that my grammar was affected. I couldn't write a single worthwhile sentence. I became like a man who was a great lover and is suddenly impotent, knowing at the same time that ultimately he will regain his power.

Regain his power Singer certainly did. Emerging in 1943 from his five-year silence, he published two important essays arguing that the future of Yiddish literature lay, paradoxically, in the past, in the effort to recreate the world the Nazis had destroyed. He also reissued *Satan in Goray* along with five new stories. In 1945, the *Forward* began to publish in serial form Singer's massive chronicle of prewar European Jewry, *The Family Moskat*. When this novel appeared in English translation in 1950, it sold 35,000 copies, giving Singer a first glimpse of the large audience that awaited him outside the Yiddish world.

Singer's rescue was complete when he was "discovered" in the early 1950's by Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg, then at work on their groundbreaking *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, and by the editors of COMMENTARY and *Partisan Review*; the latter published Saul Bellow's translation of his now-classic story, "Gimpel the Fool," in 1952. The ensuing acclaim extended far beyond what any Yiddish writer had ever received in non-Yiddish literary circles, and thereafter, Singer went from triumph to triumph.

His output was enormous—short stories, novels, children's books, many of them distinguished by his trademark preoccupation with the folkloric and the occult—and he was given every major literary award. After two decades of abject poverty, he grew rich as well as famous. In 1978, Singer became the first (and will surely be the last) Yiddish writer to receive the Nobel prize for literature. He died in 1991, old and full of honors.

FOR JANET Hadda, who teaches Yiddish at UCLA, this tale of a writer's progress is, however, far too simple. At the center of her psychobiographical study of Singer's life and work she finds a deadly conflict: between "Bashevis"—the worldly-wise, modernist Yiddish writer—and "Isaac Singer"—the transplanted grandfatherly figure, beloved in America as a simple, old-fashioned sprite.

This division Hadda traces deep

EDWARD ALEXANDER *is the author, most recently, of* The Jewish Wars: Reflections by One of the Belligerents. *His book,* Irving Howe: Socialist, Critic, Jew, *will be published by Indiana University Press in 1998.*

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into his family roots, placing special emphasis on his ill-mated parents. Singer himself saw the problem of his parents' marriage as a clash of ideas—his mother, Basheve, was a rationalist, while his father was a *hasid* who emphasized the spiritual and mystical in Judaism. But Hadda, a practicing psychoanalyst as well as a scholar of Yiddish, is confident that the real source of their difficulties resided in a confusion of gender roles, a malady she diagnoses in Singer's grandparents as well and which she blames for stymieing the young Isaac in his search for a parental "role model" and depriving him of calm, safety, attention, and love.

On the basis of her view of Singer as a troubled neurotic, Hadda interprets *Satan in Goray* as a work largely about "inadequate parental care" and *The Family Moskat* as an expression of Singer's "guilt" over having departed Poland and survived while the members of his family whom he left behind were murdered. When she comes to his early literary success in the 1950's, Hadda suggests, more ominously, that the writer was beginning to succumb to impersonation and distortion, emphasizing certain qualities in his divided soul and de-emphasizing others:

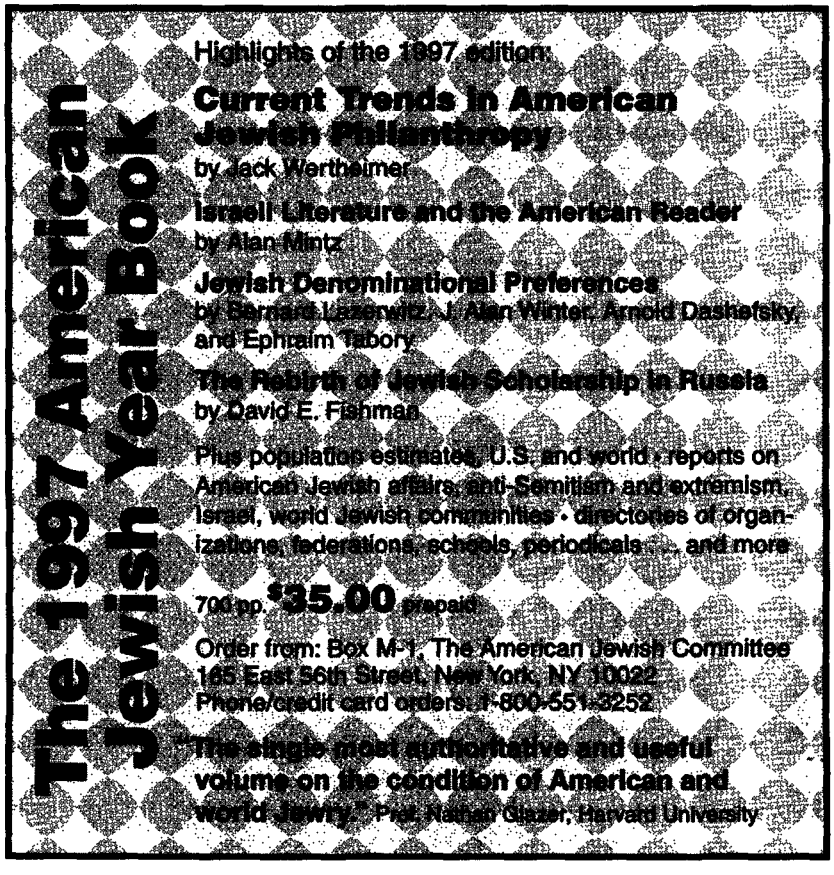
> Consciously or not, he had learned that Bashevis, the *enfant terrible*, would never capture the heart of an American audience. . . . [He] correctly, if intuitively, perceived that for readers of English, an Eastern European Jew had to be old-fashioned, mild-mannered, even naive in order to be believable.

At the *Forward*, Singer wrote under several names and in several different voices: Yitskhok Bashevis for serious literary work, Y. Varshavsky (the man from Warsaw) and D. Segal for popular journalism. Far from seeing this as an artful means of accommodating different audiences, Hadda views it as a foreshadowing of the larger internal conflict which expressed itself, at times, in outright duplicity. When writing in Yiddish, she asserts, Singer was a "harsh and conservative" social critic, while in English he took pains to come across as apolitical and unworldly. As the years passed and the temptations of fame grew, Hadda charges, so did Singer's "two-faced insincerity"; to find a place in America, he relinquished part of his essence.

IN WRITING this short biography, the only serious one of the writer thus far, Hadda has made good use of the Singer archives at the University of Texas and of interviews with Singer's family and colleagues. And it should be said that when she dismounts from her psychologizing hobbyhorse, she can be a good critic, as she shows in her discussions of "Gimpel the Fool," "The Little Shoemakers" (a dazzling nightmare-like summary of the whole of modern Jewish experience), and "Short Friday."

But dismount she rarely does. The problem is that, in Hadda's reading, Singer's formidable qualities of mind are often reduced to battles played out in his childhood home; his prodigious literary labors are but substitutes for psychotherapy; his cultural and political opinions are evidence of mental imbalance resulting in moral imposture; and his art, the work of a great master, amounts to little more than a case study, and an abnormal one at that.

Singer, a writer who surrendered himself thoroughly to the life of the imagination, possessed in high degree the quality that Keats called "negative capability"—the capacity to entertain "uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason." He deserves a biographer with something of the same capacity.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Management 101

The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work

by Arlie Russell Hochschild

Metropolitan Books. 316 pp. $22.50

Reviewed by
Leslie Lenkowsky

Arlie Russell Hochschild, a sociologist at the University of California at Berkeley, is a sympathetic chronicler of the entry of women into the workforce and the growth of two-earner families. She has now discovered the darker side of these developments. Drawing on extensive interviews and observations at "Amerco," an unnamed Midwestern company known for its "family-friendly" policies, Hochschild presents a dismal picture of the strain these policies have placed on the American family: children who march relentlessly to the rhythms of baby-sitters and day-care centers; husbands and wives who pass like ships in the night en route to and from work; new specialty services that perform various tasks *in loco parentis*, like finding playmates for children or putting together a family photo album; and contemporary "Dr. Spocks" who help parents prepare their pre-teens for long stretches spent home alone. If wholesome Midwestern families exist among Amerco's employees, Hochschild either failed to find them or deemed them so rare as to be uninteresting.

It was not supposed to happen this way. Hochschild, like other feminist-minded observers, had expected the entry of large numbers of mothers into the workforce to be a boon to all. Women would finally enjoy the satisfactions of careers, and their families would benefit from some long-overdue shifting of the burdens of child-rearing from wives to husbands. Anxious to tap new female talent, businesses would do their part as well, adopting policies like family leave and subsidized day care so that parents could more easily balance household duties and the demands of work.

What went wrong? The conventional view, especially in liberal circles, is that today's workers are *compelled* to neglect their families in order to make ends meet. But Hochschild has a different opinion: workers are spending more time on the job because they want to. Thanks to changes in management philosophy, the American office and factory floor have become much friendlier places, emphasizing flexibility and teamwork and placing a premium on employee morale. This transformation has bolstered employee productivity and commitment—just as its architects intended—but it has also, Hochschild concedes, made the workplace a good deal more humane. "In its engineered corporate cultures," she writes, "capitalism has rediscovered communal ties," not to mention the allure of well-landscaped grounds and airy, comfortable work spaces.

As bad luck would have it, moreover, all this has happened at a moment in American life when home has taken on the sort of tension and insecurity that used to be found on the job. Divorce, job mobility, and dual-career marriages have frayed family ties, and the more families have tried to cope with these pressures, the less relaxed, cooperative, and familiar they have become. No wonder work has become the place where many Americans prefer to spend their time.

What to do? Hochschild would like to see workers join forces behind something she calls a "time movement," aimed at achieving "work-family balance." Such a campaign would ultimately push for

Leslie Lenkowsky *is professor of philanthropic studies and public policy at Indiana University. He was previously president of the Hudson Institute, which published* Workforce 2020: Work and Workers in the 21st Century.

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more generous laws on work hours, family leave, and vacation time. But its goal would also be cultural reform: overthrowing the standard corporate view (or, as Hochschild calls it, the "older, male-oriented" view) of what a career requires and—at long last—persuading men to take on far more responsibilities at home. This done, work would become less voracious, and family life more inviting.

The Time Bind points to real problems. But the case that Hochschild makes is both exaggerated and incomplete. In the first place, her claim that large numbers of American families are caught in a "time bind," with two-earner couples frantically trying to hold their lives together, is unconvincing. After all, roughly half of American mothers with children under seventeen still stay at home or work part-time. And as for full-time work, Amerco is hardly typical: to judge by Hochschild's own numbers, its employees put in a much longer week and far more overtime than the national average. Thus, while the work habits that Hochschild observed at Amerco are undoubtedly not unique to that company, they are almost certainly uncharacteristic of the corporate world as a whole.

This is not to deny that Americans have tended to elevate work over home; but in addressing that phenomenon, Hochschild focuses exclusively on the enticements of corporate culture, letting off the hook a whole generation of social critics who have actively devalued family life. Today's workforce may differ from that of previous generations not, as Hochschild argues, because women have absorbed the ambitions of men; the ambitious among both sexes have always devoted disproportionate amounts of time and energy to their jobs. Rather, today's workers, having internalized new ideas about personal fulfillment, may simply no longer feel the competing pull of hearth and home to anything like the extent their parents did.

True, companies like Amerco have not helped matters by trying to make their employees more productive. But that, after all, is what corporations do. In this case, moreover, the driving force is not so much corporate greed (Hochschild's diagnosis) as the need to do more with less in an increasingly competitive economy. Indeed, before Hochschild had completed her research, Amerco "de-hired" 10 percent of its workforce as part of a "reengineering process." By adding new constraints to the ways businesses can use their workers, the "time movement" she calls for would only exacerbate the pressures that prompt such downsizing. A far better option would be to enhance the skills of employees through schooling and on-the-job training, enabling them to do more with less time and effort.

Still, there is no easy answer to the work-related difficulties of American families. As *The Time Bind* helpfully documents, the notion that men and women can easily balance the demanding responsibilities of job and family has proved, at least for a good many people, a damaging myth. Though Arlie Russell Hochschild is loath to admit it, in business as in personal life, one cannot have everything.

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